

北東

高思岳司員三部

車司員

勅敕

由東亞閱副使署參謀

To Bessie
with love from
Nicola.
Xmas. 1928.

B. Bell

直隸巡閱使參謀處公用箋

車瑞先生鑒
呈件請
定收
特寄
此
刻
張佐廷啟

花園基

丁巳年

Bessie L. Hall



**In the Land of the
Laughing Buddha**



MT. HWA, MOST SACRED OF THE FIVE HOLY MOUNTAINS AND "CENTER OF THE EARTH"

These retreats and temples at an altitude of eight thousand feet or more, are often roofed with cast metal tiles, carried up from the plains. Some of these retreats are said to be the work of the gods.

In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

The Adventures of
An American Barbarian in China

By

Upton Close

(Josef Washington Hall) Correspondent, Member Explorers Club
Lecturer on Pacific Asia, University of Washington

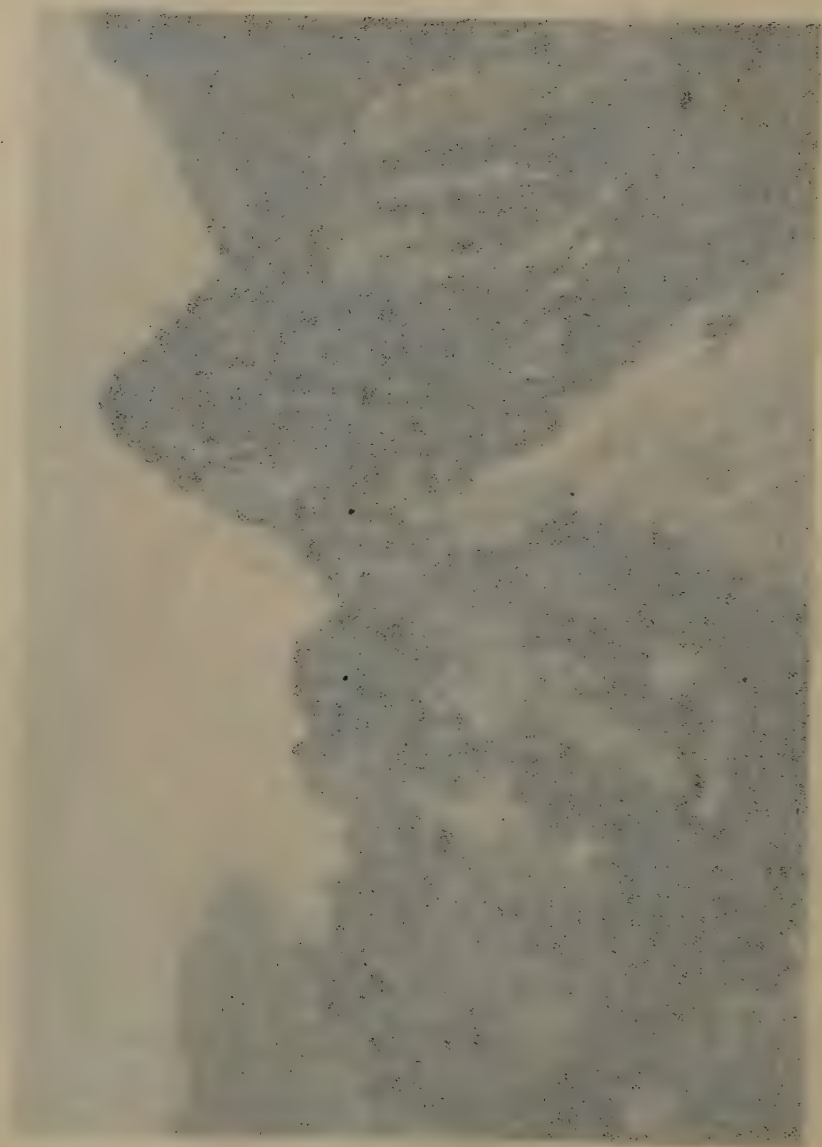
Illustrated

G. P. Putnam's Sons

New York & London

The Baker Book House

1921



In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

The Adventures of
An American Barbarian in China

By
Upton Close

(Josef Washington Hall) Correspondent, Member Explorers Club
Lecturer on Pacific Asia, University of Washington

Illustrated

G.P. Putnam's Sons

New York & London

The Knickerbocker Press

1924

Copyright, 1924
by
G. P. Putnam's Sons



Made in the United States of America

Dedicated to Newspapermen who follow the Hunch



“All of which I saw and part of which I was.”—VIRGIL

Æneid, Dryden, Book II



THE author thanks his sister, Mrs. Louise Roberts, formerly of Shanghai, China, who has been his encourager from childhood; his wife, Nettie Lipkaman Hall, whose bravery is inseparably bound up with these adventures; Professor William A. Spicer of Washington, D.C., collaborator in the work of preparation; Mr. Louis D. Froelick, Editor of *Asia Magazine*, who has read the manuscript and given invaluable suggestions; Mr. George Palmer Putnam, friendly critic and wise adviser as well as publisher; and the many other friends of various races, who have given aid in making and recording the story.

That the reader may enjoy the tart euphony of Chinese names, proper names are spelled as pronounced, all systems of Romanization to the contrary notwithstanding, except where a certain spelling has become current, for which cases a "key-spelling" is given at the end of the book.



THE MANNER OF THE PLAY

THIS is a romance, not an historical or political treatise. However, it is a fact romance. Let all readers be entertained; and let him be instructed who will.

The writer tells the story with a view neither to making the Chinese appear ridiculous, nor to making out a case for their superior way of doing things. He tells the story for the story's sake with a sympathy born of sharing the elations and reverses of its actors. He has taken an occasional rôle himself in the acting, yet he regards himself as a super rather than a principal.

A white barbarian may be *in* the Chinese world, but he never becomes *of* it. He may be an onlooker, an adviser, or a highly-flattered lackey, but he never becomes more than the utensil of the more cunning and sophisticated Chinese mind.

The Chinese, who have been thought of as the most prosaic race in the world, are in some respects the most entertaining. It is the laughter-loving Chinese mind which took the sober, introspective Buddha of India and made of him the merry genie, Mi-Do.

History since the establishment of the Republic has

brought the comic traits of the Chinese to the fore. The ancient and stately drama of the dynasties has been "jazzed" into melodrama.

The amazing era covered by this story comprises one of the recurrent deviations from the usual orderliness of Chinese life. In it we see the most sedate and law-abiding people in the world temporarily swept with a fever for boyish adventures. The spirit of dare-deviltry is never far below the surface in this normally conventional people, and the Chinese, like the French, are always ready to applaud the successful renegade even while they condemn him. Perhaps this spirit is what keeps the ancient race perennially young and interested in life.

Historical reason exists for the present nation-wide outbreak of this spirit. The emperors wisely centered the popular taste for exploits upon the imperial service contests. These "examinations" were the great sporting events of the nation, giving legitimate outlet for the individual urge to accomplishment. Satisfying recognition of preëminence in brain or brawn in every locality made good citizens of those persons much afflicted with *ging-shen* or "fluid of the gods," known to us as ambition.

The reformers abolished the examinations in an endeavor to replace this truly Chinese method of recruitment of a ruling class with the western political-party method. It did not "take." They ruined the mandarin hierarchy which bound the myriad localities of China together, and threw the ambitious and adventurous soul into temptation—nay more, into necessity—to carve out



JOSEF WASHINGTON HALL
"UPTON CLOSE"

his own unguided and opportunistic career. Such has been the effect of the attempted republican transformation upon the more active spirits of the nation.

In the adventuring which has resulted, the Chinese instinct for the dramatic has had full play. It has transformed what otherwise would be a dull and devious bit of history into a swiftly-moving melodrama.

The Chinese—be he official, scholar, artizan, peasant or menial—is always on the stage. Actions are planned, words are weighed, parts are rehearsed, whether the occasion be the resignation of an offended cook to his mistress, the purchase of a garment, the arrangement of a betrothal, the plotting of a revolution, or the formation of a new government. “Face,” that elusive element which the Caucasian is never quite sure how to evaluate, is in essence a supreme passion for dramatic effect.

This acting the Chinese takes very seriously. The one thing he cannot pardon is to have the mask pulled from his face. “Countenance” to the Chinese means both more and less than “personal dignity” to the Occidental.

Every Chinese knows himself and every other Chinese to be continually acting; he refuses therefore to take any one at face value. Herein lies the fundamental reason for the *unorganization* in China.

It is more than a problem of communications, of economics, of society—it is a problem of psychology. China will be “saved,” but not through outstanding individuals. Only a spiritual revolution, a psychological reformation, could change that. Not that the Chinese

is a misanthrope. Rather, he is the most amiable and tolerant fellow in the world. But he is of a culture that, through age, has grown too hopelessly sophisticated for hero-worship.

The so-called Republican Era in China began in farce. The Chinese is not a coward, but he is too civilized a person to fight very long when talking will do, and so the revolution of 1911 degenerated (I am speaking from our Western slant) into a "talk-fest." Here the stage-play began.

General Li Yuan-hung, whom this story leaves ousted from the President's chair at Peking for the second time, had been made commander of the Revolution at Hankow. The well-drilled and equipped northern troops under Yuan Shih-kai, ambitious henchman of the throne, drove the revolutionist army across the Yangtze and crowded the people of the city of Hankow into the river, before a column of fire fed by their own homes.

Half way between Hankow and the sea, the rebel forces, inspirited rather than controlled by Sun Yat-sen and his confederates, gained control of Nanking. A determined push on the part of the imperial army would have annihilated them there, but Yuan fought as hard against victory at Nanking as he had fought for victory at Hankow.

Representing to the Empress Dowager that the throne was doomed, Yuan received an imperial commission to establish "a people's government." At the same time he convinced the revolutionists of the hopelessness of their cause north of the Yangtze River without his support.

(It appears that he was early assured of financial and diplomatic backing from the "Powers.")

In the conference which followed, the reformers shut their eyes to the absurdity of acquiescing in an imperial commission to a dictator for the establishment of a democracy and went through a form of electing Yuan as the provisional executive of the new commonwealth. Yuan, however, true to his mandarin training, always based his claim to headship on the mandate of the Empress rather than on the behest of the Extraordinary Parliament at Nanking.

Yuan soon had the Parliament safely under his wing in Peking. Sun Yat-sen, having turned over the provisional presidency, had gone to Shanghai, to draw up idealistic railway schemes. The constitutional committee was holding its sessions in the Pavilion of the New Year in the Temple of Heaven grounds in Peking.

The only portion of the constitution, however, which interested Yuan Shih-kai, was that relating to the election of the President. By manipulation he procured the ratification of this section which, to date, remains the only section of the constitution fully ratified. By the same tactics, he brought about his election for a five-year term, the electoral college being the Parliament which sat within the power of his hand. Having received from Parliament all it could give, Yuan's next concern was to rid himself of that body.

A half-hearted revolt south of the Yangtze gave him opportunity to accuse Parliament of rebel sympathies and

force its dissolution. It was in no sense a representative body, and was too divided to function as a progressive oligarchy.

The history of the Republic has proved that the geographical representation and party oligarchy of Anglo-Saxon democracy are hopelessly out of harmony with the instincts of the Chinese people and can only exist there temporarily and artificially.

Of political organization, separate and apart from occupational and social organization, they know nothing and they cannot be taught to care. When national democracy arrives in China, its base will be the guilds and communes of city and village, always self-governing and active in social-economic affairs. They were ignored in western-worldly wisdom, by the revolutionary reformers. This indifference to their main potential resource left the work of the reformers fundamentally defective.

With this false start, the Republic was never more than a sham. Chinese wit has elevated this sham into a farce at least.

The intriguing outfit which I shall describe got its opportunity through the failure of the made-to-order Republic, and under the Republican name, became the Government of China to *us*. It never seemed that, to the Chinese people. By humorously regarding it in its true light, they have maintained their self-respect.

For over a decade, now, imperial government has given way to comic opera government; but the people have maintained order locally, with fair security for genera

business. They have accomplished this through guild and commune—patriarchally organized but democratically limited.

When June of 1923 brought the second ousting of Li Yuan-hung from the presidency of the "Republic," all hope of salvaging the reform government of 1911 ended. The National Chamber of Commerce at Shanghai advised Li to give over any attempt to perpetuate the mockery. This was the voice of a really popular movement and it marked a new phase. The comedy of errors was played out.

The next act opens with the struggle for higher-than-local authority between the ancient organizations of the people and military tyranny. It is the hope of the newer commercial organizations and guild leaders that their vast economic strength will enable them to win without meeting swords with swords.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE MANNER OF THE PLAY	xi
 CHAPTER	
I.—YUAN LEAVES THE STAGE	3
II.—“UP CLOSE” IN SHANTUNG	16
III.—A VISIT TO TSINGTAO	28
IV.—WHEELBARROWING IN THE SALT COUNTRY	38
V.—THE “PEACE AND JOY” CLUB	50
VI.—YOUTH REBELS	57
VII.—THE BATTLE AGAINST REACTION	71
VIII.—WU’S “STRATEGIC RETREAT”	84
IX.—PRESS-AGENTING A CHINESE WAR	92
X.—A CAPITAL BESIEGED BY ITS OWN ARMY	104
XI.—ONE WAR ENDED AND ANOTHER ARRANGED	112
XII.—UNDER THE SHADOW OF FAMINE	125
XIII.—WITH A WOMAN WRITER IN THE FAMINE REGION	140
XIV.—“WESTWARD HO!”	150
XV.—CHILDREN OF THE CLAY	159
XVI.—A PHILOSOPHIC RIP VAN WINKLE	169
XVII.—THE CHINESE CLEOPATRA	176

CHAPTER	PAGE
XVIII.—TRAGI-COMEDY ON LAO-TZU'S HILL . . .	184
XIX.—POLITICS AND THE FAMINE FUND . . .	191
XX.—A TYPICAL ADVENTURER	202
XXI.—LITTLE ORCHID, OF THE TUCHUN'S GARDEN .	212
XXII.—ON TO THE QUAKE BELT	221
XXIII.—"WHERE THE MOUNTAINS WALKED" . . .	236
XXIV.—NEAR DEATH	251
XXV.—THE CHIEF OF THE CHINESE MOSLEMS .	266
XXVI.—THE POT BEGINS TO BOIL AGAIN . . .	276
XXVII.—THE BANDIT KING AND THE WASHINGTON CONFERENCE	284
XXVIII.—BLAME IT ON THE STANDARD OIL . . .	294
XXIX.—LIFE ON A CHINESE FRONT	301
XXX.—THE CHRISTIANS TAKE A HAND	313
XXXI.—RIDING THE TIGER	323
XXXII.—IN SEARCH OF A PRESIDENT	335
XXXIII.—THE SHRINE OF THE LAUGHING BUDDHA .	349
SOME PRONUNCIATIONS AND PIQUANT MEANINGS	357

ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
MT. HWA, MOST SACRED OF THE FIVE HOLY MOUNTAINS AND "CENTER OF THE EARTH"	8 <i>Frontispiece</i>
"NORTH SEA"—IMPERIAL GROUNDS, PEKING	8
A BRIDGE IN THE IMPERIAL GROUNDS, PEKING	12
SOME BANDITS POSING	18
CHIEN MEN-LO	50
THE TIENTSIN BASTILE UNDER SIEGE BY STUDENTS AND POPULACE	76
THE RAMPARTS AND MOAT OF PEKING	108
ONE OF BUDDHA'S GUARDIANS	154
KWAN-YIN, GODDESS OF MERCY	154
CHINA'S "COVERED WAGON" MOVEMENT	156
TREKKING ON THE MONGOL STEPPES	156
BI YIN SZU	158
THE GREAT NORTHWEST HIGHWAY—WORN INTO THE PLAIN BY 3000 YEARS OF TRAVEL	160
TRAVEL ON THE NORTHWEST HIGHWAY IN MOIST WEATHER	160

ACCIDENTS HAPPEN ON THE CROWDED NORTHWEST HIGHWAY	162
SOME TRAFFIC ON THE GREAT NORTHWEST HIGH- WAY	162
THE FRONT GATE OF HWA-SHADOW TEMPLE . . .	172
THE OLDEST RELIC IN CHINA	172
THE "DOWAGER'S STONE" WITH THE IMPRINT OF YANG GWAY-FAY'S HAND	180
MR. BUN'S MANSION WHERE THE SENGCHANG ENTER- TAINED US	196
"PALS"	196
"A REAL CIVILIZED CHRISTIAN WAR--AIRPLANES AND EVERYTHING"	200
SHENSI'S ROBIN HOODS	204
QUEER CARGOES ON THE NORTHWEST HIGHWAY	226
"WHERE THE MOUNTAINS WALKED"	240
THROUGH MONGOLIA BY SCOW BOAT	256
WU PEI-FU, THE "LITTLE GENERAL," AND MA FU- HSIANG, CHIEF OF THE MOSLEMS, IN "MUFTI" . .	272
"SUNSET" UNDER THE ALTAIS	274
IN MONGOLIA	274
THE GREAT WALL--AIRPLANE VIEW--WHICH DIVIDES THE REALM OF THE "BANDIT KING," CHANG TSO- LIN, FROM CHINA	284

Illustrations

xxiii

FACING
PAGE

UPTON CLOSE AND GENERAL WU PEI-FU'S ADJUTANTS, JUST BEFORE DEPARTURE FROM LOYANG TO "START THE WAR"	294
WU PEI-FU'S TROOPS ADVANCING TO THE ATTACK DURING THE CHANG-WU WAR	302
ON THE PAOTING STATION PLATFORM	336
THE AUTHOR AND THE "LAUGHING BUDDHA" NEAR PEKING	356

In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

I

YUAN LEAVES THE STAGE

"THIS is the room," said the aged attendant.

He ushered me into a wing of the heavy granite building standing monstrosly out of place among the fairy pavilions of the Empress Dowager's theater in Peking.

"I was pouring tea for the youngest concubine at yonder table. President Yuan (he no longer permitted us to call him Emperor) had given permission to bring her week-old infant for his inspection. I heard a commotion in the lobby and ran to open this swinging door. The President stamped in, pulling on his sword and cursing, his stubbly gray hair standing on end. I saw one of his aides hastily retreating from the lobby, a telegram in his hand.

"'This is no time to see you. Out with that child,' he yelled as he saw the lady.

4 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

“Almost dropping the baby as she tried to curtsy and run at the same time, the girl left through the door to which Yuan was pointing with his sword. The President strode up and down the room, slashing the air, and kicking violently at the furniture in his path. I wiped up the tea-table and made a hasty exit. Outside the door, the concubine was standing in a sort of stupor.

“‘What is it?’ she demanded, clutching at my sleeve.

“‘I do not know,—bad news—probably the finish,’ I answered. ‘I never saw him so violent. His body is too weak to endure this. His wrath will kill him——’

“‘I’ll try to calm him,’ she interrupted.

“Before I could stop her she had plunged through the door. I stood there, watching. From the far end of the room by that carved screen, he saw her coming. His face was contorted with pain.

“‘Go away! Tsai! You dog’s hide—I loved you—ah, you’ll never get me!’ he exclaimed. ‘Still you come—I’ve killed hundreds like you——’

“Sword held above his head he rushed upon her. There was a terrible scream. With one slash he severed her head and left arm from her body. He stood for a moment rocking on his stubby legs. Then he swooned.”

As I listened to his story I visualized the scene. “So he thought she was the traitor, Tsai Ao?” I asked.

“Likely—the President had gone mad. He was subject to fits, you know. Tsai had been the favorite. He got a million dollars from the President to use in remov-

ing resistance to his monarchy scheme, fled with the money and started a rebellion in Yunnan. It was checkmated and Tsai died in the campaign. But it broke the President's spirit. He died of it—a month after the tragedy here.”

“He had international backing,” I said.

“And he had good soldiers. For political opponents there were two ways. First bribery; if that failed, assassination. I can tell you an interesting case.

“A prefect in one of the Manchurian provinces was under suspicion. Not a big man, but to be dealt with promptly. The President invited him to Peking. He offered him thirty thousand dollars. The prefect asked sixty. ‘A man of your station should not overestimate his price,’ said Yuan, but he gave him the sixty thousand, in silver, and a special train to carry it home. *En train* the prefect died. Acquaintances of mine took his body home, and brought the money back to Yuan. ‘I could afford to spend thirty thousand on that man,’ said the President. ‘You keep that much. Of course, if you tell, I will have to quarter you for murdering the prefect.’”

“No wonder Yuan was pursued to death by revengeful spirits,” I said.

“It was heaven's will,” said the old man. “He was a great man, but he betrayed the heavenly dynasty.”

“Yes,” I said, “and then he betrayed the democratic reformers.”

6 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

"After the flare, darkness," quoted the old man cryptically.

Thus did Yuan Shih-kai, after killing the Republic, die of the effort in the summer of 1916. He left the stage set for the melodrama which followed. None of his acts of state had so far-reaching effect as the organization and training of young warriors at the Paoting Military Academy. In China the fealty of a student for his master involves obligations second only to that of a child to his father.

Yuan's understudies were alert enough to catch his ambition but not big enough to carry it out. The master used his "boys" for the subjugation of the provinces. When he died each of them appropriated the troops under his command and used them thereafter as if they were private property.

Vice-President Li Yuan-hung, the Revolutionary hero, became president at Yuan's death; Feng Kwo-chang, governor of Nanking, became vice-president. Li is a heavy set, idealistic individual whose complaint against the world is that it does not give him time to make up his mind.

Japan's capture of Tsingtao from Germany and her ruthless violation of Chinese rights in Shantung brought the World War to China. The conflict was further forced upon China's consciousness by America's invitation to join in severing diplomatic relations. In general the Chinese attitude toward the War was that of detached onlookers viewing the violent aspects of a younger civilization.

Chinese of culture regarded the vast welter of blood as an inevitable phenomenon of races who force issues rather than avoid them—who settle questions by fighting rather than deferring them until they can be worked out by natural change.

Yuan's military disciples wanted China in the war. It would give them an excuse for increasing their private armies and bring them money and arms from the Allies. President Li's prime minister was Twan Chi-sui, chief of these military adventurers. He demanded of Parliament a declaration of war against Germany and Austria. The President and Parliament severed relations with these countries out of gratitude to America. Further than that they refused to go.

The refusal made Premier Twan furious. His minority following started a fracas on the floor of Parliament during which ruffians he had hired gave the majority solons a sound beating. This drove President Li to the one drastic act of his two fragmentary presidential careers. He sacked Premier Twan.

The deposed premier withdrew to Tientsin—that haven of intriguers. Here he called on the military commanders of the northern provinces and the result was an ultimatum demanding that Parliament disband or Peking would be attacked. In the face of the gathering storm Chang Hsun stepped forward with a suave offer of mediation.

This Chang Hsun had been a menial in the Old Dowager's household. He had carved out a vice-royalty for himself along the Tientsin-Nanking railway. Disdaining

8 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

all the new-fangled republican pretensions he and his thirty thousand braves flaunted pigtails in the face of progress.

The result of Chang Hsun's mediation was—an imperial restoration! Sunday morning, July 1, 1917, found little Hsuan Tung, the Manchu heir, on the dragon throne and Chang Hsun head of the Privy Council. Republican flags were confiscated. Everyone was ordered to reassume the queue. Quotations on hair mounted out of sight and emergency orders swamped the queue-makers' guild.

President Li took refuge in Tientsin. His last edict was a clever stroke at the restorer—the reappointment of Twan as premier. The cry of "Save the Republic" went up from Tientsin and Twan's voice led the chorus. The army Twan had prepared to march against President Li now marched against Chang Hsun, the restorer. Followed a fortnight's war. Two persons were killed and nine injured. Premier Twan took Peking and the pig-tailed Chang Hsun sought sanctuary in the Dutch Legation.

In the course of the campaign there was one battle—a battle of wits—that provides a fitting keynote to what followed. Chang's garrison at the Temple of Heaven was stubborn. The victorious Twan entrusted a colonel to evict it, providing him with seventy thousand dollars for expenses. The colonel sent a note to the garrison commander intimating that it would be a shame to fight over the sacred grounds and poor business to waste the provided money in powder and shot. It would be much more civil for the two commanders to share it and call the



"NORTH SEA"—IMPERIAL GROUNDS, PEKING

war finished. The garrison commander was amenable but felt he should get the larger share. That incidental dispute was settled by a game of Ma-jong, played, as the story goes, on the city wall overlooking the Temple grounds. During a sham engagement of smoky black shells, the "Imperial" troops vacated.

The overthrow of the five-day Restoration left Twan supreme in Peking. He and his subordinates at once set to work to make what they could out of the World War situation. One of their acts was to sell China's fleet to a Sino-Japanese fishing company, in which Twan was a stockholder. But Twan needed a presidential figure-head. For Li, who had settled himself in Tientsin, swore that he would never return to office.

Feng Kwo-chang was a man of the needed type. He was known as the "Wall-Straddler" for his ability to ride partisan fences. It was at Nanking that I became acquainted with the "Wall-Straddler."

The river suburb, five miles south of the walls of the old Ming capital, still bore evidence of the destruction wrought in revolutionary times when I took residence in the city in 1916, just after the death of the almost-emperor, Yuan. My home was an immense semi-foreign building, once the mansion of a Manchu prince, opposite General Feng's yamen. In due course I made a call on my distinguished neighbor. The yamen stood in one end of a park, the other end containing pleasure pavilions, a private theater, and the residences of the governor's wife and concubines; the whole surrounded by a wall fifteen

10 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

feet high, under which ran the dinky cars of the city railroad. As I came up along the track I heard an outrageous noise. Finally I made it out. Sixty odd musicians, most of them playing brass or tin, each with his own improvised variations and independently of the rest, were rendering "God Be With You Till We Meet Again."

I found the Wall-Straddler in a tea-house, listening to his band. An effeminate fellow, I thought, a lover of ease and wealth, a clever schemer, yet a most gracious man to meet. I did learn something from that interview. I got some grandiose phrases of guest talk which I promptly added to my store of verbal ammunition. Blank shells, it is true, but much fighting in China is done with blanks.

As I went out of the great yamen door I passed coolies with carrying poles bringing boxes into the grounds to the accompaniment of their plaintive "Hai-ya-ho." Their burdens were all of a similar size and label. I dared not stop to question at the time, and my curiosity was not satisfied until I read in a Shanghai paper the report that Feng had arranged with the British Opium Monopoly to take over their stocks worth several million dollars in anticipation of the imminent closing out of the British opium trade through an agreement reached between Yuan Shih-kai and the British government several years previously. It stated that some thousands of ounces of the drug had already been delivered to Feng.

The Wall-Straddler and his confederates did all in their power to suppress publicity, but found themselves, as have all officials since, no match for China's growing class

of newspapermen. A nation-wide protest went up which threatened to engulf the Yangtze governor.

One evening my servant came running to me as I sat at dinner. "The water has gone," he yelled. He saw my bewilderment. "The fire has wandered out!" he exclaimed, using a more apprehensible but synonymous phrase.¹

"Where?" I asked, rising from the table.

He led me up four flights of rickety stairs to the flat roof of the building. Over in the governor's park I saw dense clouds of smoke issuing from among the trees. Soon the fiery outlines of a building were visible. Wooden structures came crashing down from high in the air, to the accompaniment of great shrieking and shouting from within the park.

Down the Lane of the White Pavilion the volunteer fire department charged, armed with immense paper lanterns, flying banners, and dragging by long ropes a small box on four wooden wheels. Behind the box came the hose and bucket brigades. The bucket men were to keep the box filled with water from nearby ponds and wells while the hoseman forced it out with a small pressure pump. However, the firemen found the massive gates shut against them, and sat down to smoke until such time as they might be admitted.

Meanwhile, a series of explosions, sometimes as frequent as machine gun fire, came from the flames.

¹ A common euphemism for a conflagration. When the water element "goes," the fire element of course takes immediate and undisputed control.

12 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

"Ammunition?" I asked Pu Yi.

"No," he said, "bamboo burning. The joints explode like that when they are hot." I suddenly appreciated the expressive Chinese literary phrase: "Like fire in a bamboo forest."

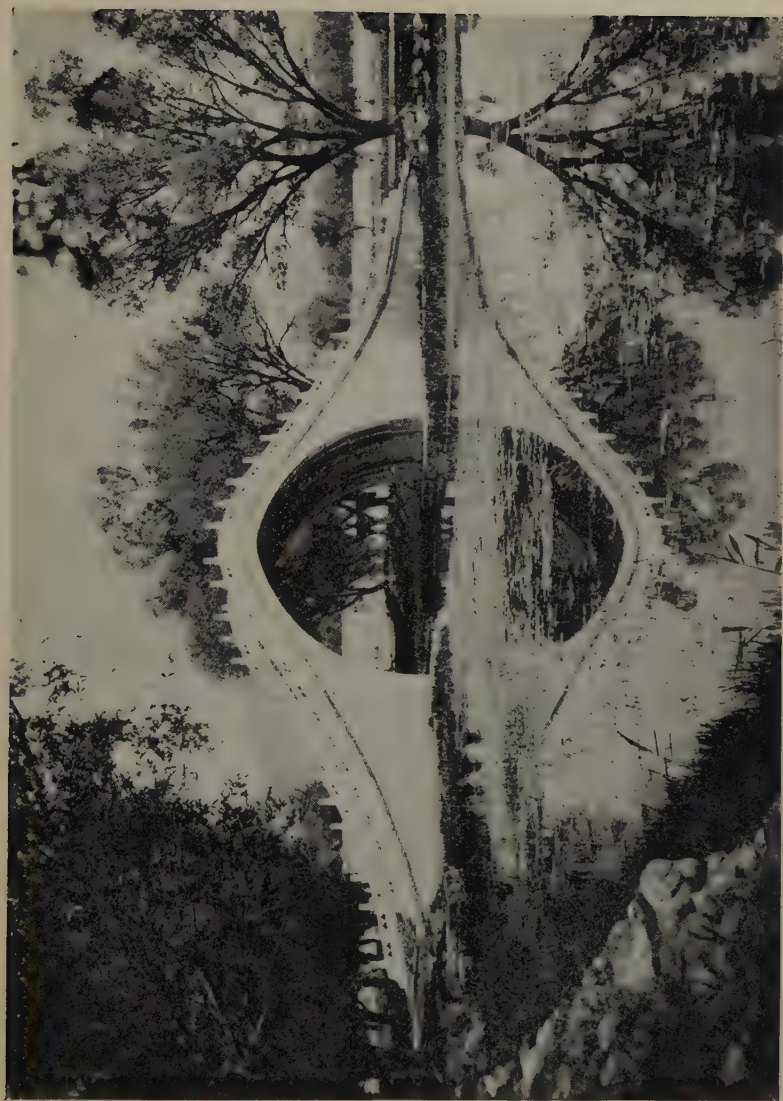
A hundred thousand people must have filled the market-place and alleys at our feet before the flames died down. The railway track was so covered with a mass of humanity that the diminutive train had to suspend schedule. Upstairs tea-shops in the surrounding market which gave grand-stand views of the fire did a rushing business.

Finally the great red-lacquered, nail studded yamen doors opened. A *ting-chai* appeared to make an announcement, which was instantly relayed up to us.

"The Governor wishes to say that the fire has consumed one of his private residences and some British opium which he had stored there to keep the degrading drug away from the people. Two concubines, by the way, perished in the flames. There was no other loss. He appreciates your solicitude."

We went down from the roof wondering if we had smelled burning opium. We could almost imagine that we were a little drugged from fumes, but our intelligence told us better.

No further clue was ever gained to General Feng's opium. His successor to the Presidency made a *beau geste* by publicly burning the portion of the stock remaining at Shanghai.



A BRIDGE IN THE IMPERIAL GROUNDS, PEKING

Came the Wall-Straddler's call to higher honors. His Nanking establishment he left in the trust of a henchman, Li Hsun, who was destined for a mysterious death. But Feng never returned.

His was the crookedest and most care-free of all China's presidential administrations. Feng had no parliament to complicate matters—the members having taken refuge in the South, which offered support to Li, but would have none of Twan and his gang. In leaving Nanking for Peking, Feng left substantive power for insubstantial honor, but he made the honor pay. In less than two years he had gained control of several coal mines, developed by Germans, and banked a million dollars or so in proceeds from the sale of offices.

The affairs of the Republic, internal and international, were left to Twan and his satellites. A state of war with Germany and Austria was declared at once, and negotiations for military alliance with Japan got under way. Nishihara, agent of the Japanese militarists, backed by Japanese banks which foolishly trusted in imperialist assurances, came to Peking and made payments aggregating 175,000,000 yen to Twan's officials in return for promised mortgages on China's independence and sovereignty. In many cases no documentary receipt other than an informal personal acknowledgment was given;—sometimes the amount was not even mentioned.

Twan was a political boss, directing from behind the scenes, rather than an open dictator. He had many of the qualities of the American municipal politician. Big,

14 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

bluff, careless of detail, regardless of how money was gathered and reckless of how it was spent, exercising too little restraint over his protégés and always backing them when in difficulty, resolute against his enemies, but putty in the hands of his friends and disciples, he was tolerated by the people because of his human foibles. One trait which endeared him to his people was his love of gambling. Chess was his favorite game, and he is regarded as China's greatest chess master; but he played a strong hand at Chinese cards, Ma-jong (or Sparrow), and even western poker. He was the dean of a coterie of official gamblers about whom many stories are told.

A Mr. Sze built a fifty-thousand-dollar summer home at Peitaiho Beach on the Gulf of Chihli, and invited this group to an evening at Ma-jong in the new mansion by way of house-warming. By dawn, the ownership of the house had passed from the host to one of his guests. This man, as host, gave a house-warming party the following night, as a result of which the establishment again changed hands.

Gambling, being usually banned, has as much zest for the Chinese as violating the prohibition amendment has for Americans.

Chinese ladies, going to gaming parties, especially at New Year, and hardly daring to carry stakes in the form of obvious possessions, put on several pairs of silken pantaloons which are played for until—none remain!

Feng stepped out of the presidency ostensibly of his

own volition, having filled out, according to one interpretation, the term of his predecessor. The more likely reason was a quarrel with Twan. He took up residence in an expropriated Austrian mansion in Tientsin. Here he rapidly increased his household. The Chinese ethics of the sexes does not permit promiscuity and is unfavorable to divorce; it is tolerant of a man's possessing as many women as he may wish, provided he can care for them and their children in dignity and comfort. Yet Feng, his friends felt, was too old for that sort of thing. It was also understood that he had fallen victim to the drug habit.

A year later I was in Tientsin, connected with the *North China Star*, an experiment in American journalism. One night, while I was making up the front page, Hollington K. Tong, the Chinese journalist, popped his head into the office.

"Feng's dead," he announced in his usual short manner.

"What's the cause?" I asked, pursuing him down the stairs.

"Not for your paper," was his answer as he disappeared out of the building, "but I should say, 'concubinitis and opiomania.'"

II

"UP CLOSE" IN SHANTUNG

BETWEEN the time when I knew the "Wall-Straddler" in Nanking and my publishing of his obituary in Tientsin, I was in Shantung province. Here I had opportunity for first-hand observation of the Japanese penetration which brought about a sudden turn in China's internal drama. The seizure of Tsingtao and the railroad connecting it with Tsinan, the provincial capital, was the first step in a skillfully directed plot against Chinese sovereignty in this noblest of the provinces.

Japan never controlled Shantung province, politically or economically, as so often represented. Had she been allowed to keep her seizures and continue her policy, she soon would have had a strangle-hold on the province, and through it, on North China. But the Chinese provincial and local administrations, outside of the rapier-like railway area, never ceased to function, although much harassed and interfered with by Japanese military, and by subsidized Chinese outlaws and officials.

I have no fear that this book will offend my many Japanese friends and acquaintances. The expansionists among them have already admitted the crime or at least the mistake. The others have been far more scathing in denunciation of these their countrymen and their methods, than I.

Political and military measures aimed at securing Japanese ascendancy were supplemented in Shantung by the promotion of vice among the natives. At one time, one hundred and ten Japanese “drug stores,” according to verified count taken under my direction, existed in the new business suburb of old Tsinan. Many of these had a stock of goods which they would not sell. Their sole support, aside from the small subsidies some of them received of the Japanese government, was the administration of morphia injections and illicit sales of arms to bad elements. Japanese butterfly women swarmed over the city.

Protests against Japanese imperialistic activities, as well as infringements upon freedom of trade and missionary effort, brought very little action abroad. Great Britain, France, Italy and Russia were tied up by secret treaties. America was too busy saving France at the moment to think of distant Shantung.

During these developments I was travelling about the province in Chinese clothing by mule litter, mule back, or the plebeian wheelbarrow, eating native food, and sleeping in native homes or inns. Squatting in the evenings on the brick “kang” among a crowd of travellers, with only a wick in a dish of bean-oil to light the smoky atmosphere,

18 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

I overheard many tales of the aggressor. Some of these I was able to verify.

At times they concerned the relation of the Japanese to the brigands, who persist in Shantung, as in Sicily, in spite of an ancient civilization; banditry being a more or less conventional outlet for excessive *ging-shen*.

They are usually of the Robin Hood type in China,—villains of one generation and heroes of the next. Much of the folklore, drama and fiction of the Chinese literature is built up around the “Red-beards” and their exploits. A few of these romantic outlaws—often strong characters who have suffered at the hands of extortionate officials—always exist, and their numbers are greatly augmented during periods of unsettled administration.

At such times peasants take to brigandry in the off season, reverting to law-abiding citizenship when it comes time to work the crops. The “bandit season,” throughout North China, when the menace is worst, is while the uncut *gao-liang*, a grain-bearing sorghum, towers over the fields, burying the narrow trails in its foliage. The existence of the private armies of recent years has greatly augmented the evil. As President Li aptly said in a proclamation made at the time of his reinstatement:

“If the policy is disbandment, soldiers turn bandits. If it is recruiting, bandits turn soldiers. Therefore there is no brigand who is not a soldier and no soldier who is not a brigand.” The difference between brigands and soldiers is analogous to the difference between “outs” and “ins” in politics.



SOME BANDITS POSING

After the occupation, the bandits generally moved their headquarters from the mountain fastnesses of the southern fringe of the province into the Japanese-controlled area. They found operations much more convenient here with the toleration or connivance of the invaders. Kidnappings of wealthy Chinese citizens in the vicinity of Tsingtao and along the railway were very frequent. The Chinese euphemism generally used for being kidnapped is “to have issued a confinement ticket.”

I still have the “confinement ticket” of a lad named Yu, who was seized from the supper table in the house of his father by a band of men who rushed the compound gate. He was carried to the Japanese railway, tied in a grain sack, and checked by a Japanese baggage man to Tsingtao, and there he was kept underneath a pile of sacked grain in a feed shop until the ransom was paid, which, as in every other instance, was demanded in Japanese money.

In another case, Japanese authorities desired to purchase some Chinese land on the outskirts of Tsingtao for public purposes. The Chinese owners declined to part with their ancestral heritages. Shortly thereafter, they were kidnapped, and the ransom price was exactly that which they were offered for the land. Having no other resources with which to pay, they had to give up their patrimony in order to procure their freedom. Forced sale to Japanese subjects was a common measure with the military administration, but this roundabout method was unusual.

Since the Japanese withdrawal, the brigands have again

20 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

retired to the hills, reinforced, however, in boldness, and in arms. Up to recent times these outlaws have had special respect for foreigners, whose immunity has been a source of envy to the Chinese populace. Within the last several years, the squabbles of white men and the unrestrained actions of the Japanese have wiped out much of the preferential respect of the Chinese for the stranger within their gates.

Most noticeably was this the case in the famous train hold-up in southern Shantung, which was not without its sardonic aspect. America took arms to Vladivostok to fight the Russians, then withdrew and left them in the care of the Japanese. A Japanese officer allowed "White" partizans to ship the arms to Chang Tso-lin, independent ruler of Manchuria. He, in turn, desiring to embarrass the leaders south of the great wall who had recently defeated him, permitted a quantity of these good American rifles to be smuggled along the Shantung coast. Shantungese brigands used them to kidnap and rob American and other tourists!

On one of my excursions I ran into Lao Yang-ren, or "the Foreigner," as he was dubbed, one of the brigand chiefs concerned in the train hold-up of May, 1923.

I was travelling from Chefoo, the lovely old harbor on the Gulf of Chihli, directly southward across the promontory. The ocean end of the promontory possesses a rugged beauty in its red hills, swift streams and abrupt rock barriers, the weatherbeaten skeletons of decayed mountain ranges. When I left Chefoo, it was raining, and

I took a mule litter, the primitive form of Pullman travel.

The fastidious Westerner may deem it crude, but if the tiny mat-covered car which rides precariously upon the two poles between the mules fore and aft be water-tight, and the net bottom filled with one's baggage so as to make a level floor upon which the bedding is spread, one can rock along pleasantly on the flat of his back and read, or look out of a peep-hole at the scenery. Or, he can take advantage of the sagging bottom as a cockpit for his legs and feet, and have his baggage packed so as to make a seat, leaving clearance for his head under the low roof.

Shantung mules are sturdy animals, and one can trek along this way day after day in slothful comfort, provided his stomach is proof against seasickness, and his nerves against the dangers of the precipices. In addition to the swaying caused by the single-footing mules, there is the head-down-feet-up, head-up-feet-down sensation of going up and down grade, and the head-jerking, as good as any chiropractic adjustment, to which the rear mule subjects you when throwing his weight and yours step by step up a steep hill. All in all, however, the “shenza” is a delightful mode of travel.

On the third day out, considerably before noon, I emerged from mountains into a little valley, which broadened out to salt marshes, interspersed with great rocky crags, where it met the Yellow Sea. The mules sighted a town among the poplars below, and enlivened by the prospect of an early midday rest and meal, struck out on the trot. The muleteer who had been striding along

22 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

behind, cracking his long whip at every bush, gave chase, cursing the mules roundly for mud-turtles. They went like anything but mud-turtles, however. I crawled out on the shafts, not knowing whether it was safer to jump or ride.

Suddenly we crashed through a traffic jam on the road, upsetting another litter, several wheelbarrows and a cart. The right shaft of my own conveyance snapped and described an arc above my head as the litter turned bottom-side up. With a scramble I managed to land upon the back of the front mule, and in this fashion we went into town, the litter-car still riding, with the baggage in the roof.

Without slacking speed my mule swerved into the first inn doorway which he saw, utterly disregarding a sentry who wildly waved at us to go on. In the narrow doorway, however, with the wrecked litter jammed against the doorpost, we stopped. The sentry pounced upon the muleteer, who was hot on the trail, and began slapping him about the padded shoulders.

A vociferous mob of ruffians crowded out of the eating-hall next the gate, and surrounded us. They were dressed in six or seven species of uniform, military, police, train conductors, students, and even boy scouts—no one of them, however, possessing a complete outfit of any one kind. They all wore long wooden scabbards containing rough knives, and some of them carried six-shooters and ancient carbines.

"I see," said I, collecting myself, and dropping down from my uncomfortable saddle, "that my mules have acted very discourteously in attempting to force an

entrance into the abode of the knightly guardians of virtue and order. But, they are already humbled. On their behalf and on mine, I apologize. Mulechaser” (as Chinese call their “skinners”), “find another inn at once. This one, you see, is occupied by the honorable military gentlemen.”

By this time the brigands’ sense of humor had overcome their feeling of affront.

“Indeed, you are welcome, Foreign Elder-born,” said a little chap with a dapper military cap and Sam Browne belt, stepping forward, “but why present yourself in such haste?”

“I will withdraw and leave you to your dinner, gentlemen,” I said.

“No, no!—come in. You shall be our guest!”

Already half a dozen of them were around me, feeling of my clothing, commenting upon my sun glasses, and the height of my nose. Several fell to and assisted the muleteer in getting straightened out. “Fine mules!” they said, as they ordered the inn-keeper to provide fodder. The muleteer watered his animals, drinking himself out of the same gong, for the Shantungese drink raw water and the Chinese hold the mule to be a “clean-mouthed” animal. He begged me in a whisper to go on.

“No,” I said, “I will stop here with my friends.”

Had I known what hardship I was bringing upon him, I should have heeded his request.

Escorted by bandits I went into the dirt-floor kitchen-dining room and sat down. Across the table was an

immense fellow with a high fur cap and entirely too much beard for a pure-blood Chinese. He was eating noodles by suction and guiding them into the cavern with chopsticks, apparently undistracted by my arrival.

"Well, young fellow," he bellowed, "have some noodles." And before I could protest he had emptied half his immense dish into a bowl before me.

"Oh!" exclaimed one of my escorts, "Mr. Foreigner, meet our chief, Mr. Lao, the Foreigner!" and a hearty laugh went around the room at this pun.

"Why do you call your chief 'The Foreigner'?" I asked.

"Well, look at that beard!—and he speaks Japanese, you know. He spent many years in Formosa. But he's a regular fellow just the same!"

While this dialogue regarding him went on in his hearing, the brigand leader continued to sniffle noodles, regarding me above the rim of his bowl out of solemn, watery eyes.

"Where are you going, brother?" he asked when he had finished his meal.

"To Kao-mi, by your grace," I replied.

"*Ting-chai!*" he bellowed, and a ragged fellow saluted. "See that this young fellow has safe conduct to Kao-mi. But don't let those two fine mules out of your sight. Go and get him a kitten-donkey to ride on and two or three coolies to carry his luggage." And to me, "You won't need to pay for them, so it will be all the same to you."

I was a bit disconcerted at the way the change in my mode of travel was brought about, although at

the same time rather glad to be rid of the mules. My mulechaser was in tears, however. He elected to stay with his animals, and I consoled him by paying him for the entire trip. The kitten-donkey gets his name from his fur and size—or rather his lack of size. I threw my bedding bag over the back of the little animal and got astride.

We set out, the coolies behind me with the stuff slung from their carrying poles by a minimum of roping (how it ever sticks I don't know) and two ragged bandit guards toting carbines, slouching along in the rear. We soon lost these latter. We felt easier all around, but the moment they were out of sight my carriers began importuning me for money.

"Didn't old Lao pay you?" I asked. "He told me that I wouldn't need to give you anything."

"Why, of course not, he never pays anybody," was the reply. "You wouldn't have to pay either if you were a bandit like he is. But of course you are a respectable foreign gentleman, with a big pocketbook and pitying heart——"

"Oh, leave off the soft-soap. I'll pay," I said. "See if you can't get along without stopping so often to smoke. I want to make Kao-mi tonight!"

"We knew you would, foreigners always have big hearts. If we hadn't been sure of you, old Lao's *Ting-chai* would never have found us," they chuckled, as they took up their burdens.

Even when I held up my toes, my feet barely skimmed the ground. The fat bedding-bag veered from side to side

26 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

over the miniature saddle. Then the back-strap slipped off the rump-stick and I slid over the beast's head into the road. As I went I made a clutch at the nearest solid thing, which happened to be the head of the donkey-man, and came up with his false queue in my hand. The men of the "Feet-guild," as the transportation union is called, are particularly conservative about the pig-tail.

There was a fearful row. He maintained, and the carriers sided with him, that after subjection to such an indignity it was impossible for him to go on with me. I countered with a claim that a donkey-man who would subject a passenger to the perils of such an animal ought to lose not only his braid but his head as well. Ultimately we compromised, on the basis of a tip of fifty cents at the railroad on condition that we make it by sundown.

Alternately leading from in front and urging from behind, the donkey-man got me within sight of the railroad station just after the sun had dropped below the horizon. Of course he claimed his tip just the same. We were discussing the point when a female of the donkey species in the neighborhood of the station enticed my mount with an inviting whinny. Fifteen miles of carrying a load twice as big as himself had in no way dampened his amorous ardor. He was off in a mad rush with me still on his back. Half way to the station I lit in a heap under my bedclothes. I crawled out and joined in the chase. We caught the ass and tied him to a tree near the station building.

It seems that there were signs in Japanese forbidding the

bringing of animals into the station grounds. Under the circumstances, these had been overlooked by the donkey, the driver, and myself. The Japanese station janitor, a raw-boned youth of sixteen or seventeen, came tearing out of the station with an enormous mop in his hands. Jumping around like a frenzied imp he began to beat first the driver and then the donkey with the head of the mop. Now if there was any beating of that animal to be done, I wanted to do it myself. When I recovered from my surprise, I tackled the youth, wrested the mop from him, and chased him back into the station with it.

The Chinese at Kao-mi were stirred by rumors that Twan's government in Peking was agreeing to legitimize Japan's position in Shantung. Organized passive opposition was talked. Also, American business and missions, I heard, were being forced out of Tsingtao. I headed for that port to discover what I could.

III

A VISIT TO TSINGTAO

THE Japanese baggage master looked carefully through my luggage, and required me to give a detailed statement in writing of any unusual article. I wondered how the bandits had got by with a fifteen-year-old boy in a grain sack! Japanese gendarmes wandered about, taking baked sweet-potatoes from confectionery shops without payment and ogling Chinese girls.

A major of gendarmerie came down to inspect the station. He found a rickshaw man who had followed his passenger into the waiting room to beg for more money. Drawing his long sword he beat the coolie with the flat of it until the fellow crouched under a bench, sobbing in insane terror. It is to the honor of the Japanese people that they have repudiated such conduct on the Asiatic mainland on the part of their most esteemed class.

The contact of Japanese and Chinese in Shantung often afforded occasion to remark the distinctive traits of the two peoples as they were set in prominence during their contest over the province. The Chinese possess a sort of passive cruelty—a cruelty of neglect, probably due to

the absence of the doctrine of mutual concern from their philosophy of mutual respect. But they have none of that delight in cruelty, that harsh strain which along with greater idealism, resoluteness and stoical fidelity to their superiors, is often seen in the Japanese. I have seen Chinese watch suffering curiously; but I have never seen a Chinese cause or prolong suffering for the delight afforded thereby. The Chinese has the most versatile sense of humor in the world, whereas the Japanese has next to none at all. The Japanese laughs, or grins, for convention's sake, but rarely smiles.

On the train, riding toward Kiaochow Bay over one of the smoothest roadbeds in the world, made with iron ties cast in the Ruhr, I met the Rev. J. MacGowan, a whimsical British missionary, who has written ably on *Chinese Men and Manners*. He was trying to find out from the Japanese train boy why it was necessary for Mrs. MacGowan and a Japanese merchant to occupy one coupé and himself and a butterfly lady another, and he was getting rather heated over it. An ostentatious young Japanese came forward to assist in the explanation. He said that since the tickets had been sold that way no change could be made. The conductor finally made the extreme concession of allowing Mr. MacGowan to give his wife his own berth, while he sat up.

Having made himself heard in MacGowan's controversy the newcomer turned to me.

"Fsui . . ." he began, sucking in his breath, "I passport officer. You got passport?"

30 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

"Yes," I said, "but I don't know why I should show it. My country has never recognized your sovereignty over this railroad."

"Who is your country?"

"Who?—Uncle Sam."

"Sam who? Excuse me, my English very poor. Will you teach me English? You come from Europe?"

"No."

"Australia?"

"No."

"Africa?"

"No."

"Ah, I know. America. United States."

"Correct."

"What part you come from?"

"Well, most anywhere."

"*Enywhere?* Must be small town—I don't know. Spell please."

Today if you should turn up the records of the Japanese occupational forces, wherever they are kept (and I will guarantee that they are kept somewhere, unless the earthquake and fire destroyed them), you would find, "Hall, Jo Sef, City: Enywhere; Country, U. S. A.; dressed Chinese clothes. Wouldn't show passport. Watch him. Y."

A little later the Japanese, whose name was Yamamoto, returned to me. "You know Upton Close?" he asked. "Is he American man?"

Sometime previously I had decided that reams of reports

filed in the State Department would have less influence in saving Shantung to China than a few stories in American newspapers. I sent some articles secretly to my friend J. B. Powell, editor of the *Shanghai Weekly Review*, the same Powell who was a prominent American captive in the kidnapping case. Under the stories I put the words "Up close" as an indication of where I was. Powell ran them as the author's name under the title. They evolved into "Upton Close," and the name has stuck to me since. The Japanese authorities were very keen to discover the origin of the material, which comprised the first on-the-ground record of their penetration, to reach the outside world.

"I know of no countryman of that name," I truthfully replied. "Why—who is he?"

"Oh, very bad man," said Yamamoto. "Suppose you find out for me, Japanese commander have money pay you."

"Why don't you inquire of the American Consular Service," I asked. "They have registry of all Americans."

Yamamoto sucked in his breath. "Very good idea." (I learned later that such an inquiry had been made through the Japanese consular authorities. The American Consul merely replied that he had no national of that name listed. The Japanese then asked the American diplomatic and consular authorities to force Powell to disclose the identity of his contributor. The reply was that the American press is not subject to such compulsion on the part of governmental authorities.)

32 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

Yamamoto came back to the original subject of controversy. "Why you not show passport?" he asked.

"Just to be obstinate."

"American people like be obstinate?"

"Same as good friends, Japanese people."

"But," he announced, "you do not show passport you cannot go in Tsingtao."

Undoubtedly, he planned to deal with me as soon as we crossed the border of the former leased territory. But I stepped off the train one station too soon. Going across country five miles, past the great "coolie camp" where the British examined and drilled the labor battalions which they recruited in this province, I reached the village of Li Tswen, just inside the Japanese jurisdiction. Twice a week Li Tswen is a mart swarming with human beings, the wide, dry, river-bed covered with tents and merchandise. The rest of the time it is a skeleton of a village, consisting of a few mud buildings on either bank.

By cautious inquiry I located the home of the Widow Fang, mother of a student friend in Tsinan. She got me a meal of sweet yams and millet gruel, and having no spare sleeping-boards, gave me the women's apartment, while she and her son's betrothed, a fifteen-year-old daughter of one of the neighbors, slept on the mud stove in the kitchen. This showed her to be a "modernist," for the superstitious Chinese will not so much as comb his hair in view of the stove for fear of offending the kitchen-spirit.

My quarters consisted of a walled-off *kang*, or mud-and-brick platform, under-run with flues. In cold weather

brush or coal fires are built in the flue doors on the room side and the smoke goes up a chimney in the wall on the opposite side. One gets used to roasting on one side and freezing on the other. If he uses too many blankets they store up the heat and he is subjected to a Turkish bath.

My preference when knocking about China is the sleeping-boards—usually two planks, each a foot and a half wide, set up at bed time on wooden horses. Made of soft pine, they are noticeably more lenient than the bricks, although one can learn to sleep upon either with much more comfort than most of us get from a feather bed. I had a hard bed built in my home in Peking as I had lost the art of sleeping on a modern springs and mattress.

The walls of the *kang* room in the widow's house were neatly papered. A clean, finely woven, straw mat covered the bricks. As I spread my bedclothes on this, Widow Fang came with a pair of Chinese scissors, hand-hammered out of iron, with thumb and finger loops as fine as wire. I accepted them blankly and bade her good-night. Not being able to puzzle out the meaning of the gift, I slipped the scissors under my pillow and went to sleep.

Toward morning I awoke to hear a strange crackling noise. I threw back my covers, sat up, and lit my candle. There was the source! A red he-scorpion, half as big as a crawfish, clashing his scales and waving his tail ominously above his head—in bed with me! I usually ignore crawling or hopping things—I have slept all over China and Arkansas and never had a bite,—but I objected to this bedfellow.

34 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

I sat there eyeing him, wondering what to do. He had armor-plate that only steel could crush, and an unsuccessful attack might result seriously, for his kind are exceedingly swift on their feet.

The scissors, of course!

Stealthily I lowered them to the level of the waving tail, and with a sudden snip deprived him of his poisonous weapon. Conquered and helpless he scurried into a corner. Then I searched for his mate, for the scorpions go in pairs, and found her scrambling under a loose edge of wallpaper. I enticed her out into the open and likewise sheared her of her sting.

After a hasty meal of duck's eggs and bean curd, I left at dawn in a rickshaw for Tsingtao. The excellent road constructed by the Germans along the templed Lao Mountains, scene of much of China's fairy lore, was badly neglected, but by steady trotting the coolie covered the ten or more miles considerably before noon. We passed through the tangle of barbed wire which had been the Germans' outer line of defense, then through a gap in the concrete wall which had been the second line.

In the center of the road was a wheelbarrow track of concrete which saved the road from cutting by the steel-rimmed wheels of these heavily freighted vehicles. Up over a steep ridge we went, with the hill bearing the governor's palace and dismantled fort towering on our right, then down into that beauty-spot of red-tiled roofs and magnificent trees—a jewel city of the Rhine, built here in the province of Confucius.

Entering the city in this unusual manner, I was unchallenged. In a tiny Chinese restaurant in the market district, owned by my student friend's uncle, I changed into the European clothes which I had with me. Then I strolled down to the American Consulate, a spacious building on a fine site.

The American Consulate in Tsingtao enjoyed a unique position from the time of the fall of German authority. Not willing to recognize Japan's occupation by reaccréditing the consul to Japan, or to acquiesce in it by recalling him, the American State Department continued him under the fiction that he was accredited to Germany. It was impossible to change the consul, since a notification to the Japanese authorities of change in personnel would be equivalent to recognition, and Mr. Willys R. Peck had to continue in the unenvied responsibility until the recent return of Tsingtao to China, even though he was most of the time doing heavy duty in the Legation at Peking and residing in Tsingtao by proxy.

I found the consul at home, and congratulated him on the privilege of living in such a beauty spot.

"Give me a mud hut in a Chinese city," he said. "The annoyances to which these people can subject one are maddening. Day before yesterday my telephone was disconnected, yesterday my lights went out, today I have no water. Tomorrow, I am informed, we must submit to sanitary inspection. I shall have to complain about the water and lights—Japanese inspectors will then make six or eight visits to ascertain that it was really I who com-

36 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

plained, after which two dozen Japanese workmen will swarm over the house for a week or more. They can drive a man crazy with their annoyances, and they are always so damned courteous about them. If you would like to see how they work, call on the Presbyterian Mission School here."

I walked up to the residence of Reverend Scott, missionary, author, and orator, sometime lecturer at Yale University. We stood on his porch overlooking the "little" harbor, crowded with sailing junks, safe from steam-propelled vessels which anchored on the other side of the breakwater.

"What are all these new, red-tiled buildings which cover the slope?" I asked him.

"Yoshiwara," said he. "Built here by the Japanese military authorities for the purpose of forcing us out. We are having to close our school for young men and women—you can readily appreciate why, if you will read those signs."

I scanned the nearest one, set up in large Chinese characters over one of the houses. The sign read:

"We have girls that will please you—guaranteed young,—prices popular." Other advertisements were more salacious.

I turned in disgust toward the railroad station. As I was boarding a train, I was confronted by Yamamoto.

"Ah," he said, after the usual intake of air. "You return in a more comfortable style than you came."

"I came very comfortably," I said.

"But your bed at Chinese widow's—very nice?" he smirked.

"Indeed! Is there anything I can tell you to make your records more complete?"

He sucked in his breath a moment. "Tell me what you do now?"

"Yamamoto!" I chided. "That isn't sportsmanlike. Any clues you get to my past I will be glad to elucidate. But it is going beyond the ethics of secret service to ask a man to disclose his future." And I left him there sucking in his breath.

IV

WHEELBARROWING IN THE SALT COUNTRY

BEFORE leaving Tsingtao, I received word that a friend and trusted fellow-investigator, Yu Ming-en, was down with smallpox in a village in the northwest part of the promontory. Detraining at Weihsien—two walled cities connected by a high bridge—I set out to fetch him.

The "Feet Union," particularly prosperous in this district, wanted to charge me outrageously for animals. So I fell back on the wheelbarrow, China's "flivver." At any rate, I consoled myself, a wheelbarrow is not so subject to the weaknesses of the flesh as mules and donkeys.

Travel by wheelbarrow consists of alternately walking, and sitting sidewise—or with feet stuck straight out before one—on the narrow bench beside the great squealing wheel. The barrow man balances with his hands, but pushes with a cloth belt passed over his shoulders and hooked on either shaft.

Most barrow men have their pace, physical and mental, which an earthquake could not change. My motive

power on this occasion was different. He was a great genial giant who had bossed a gang of longshoremen at Tsingtao during the heyday of German shipping. Later he became major domo in a German home. He liked the German men—said they knew what they wanted, demanded perfect service, and rewarded well. In common with most Orientals who have worked in German homes, he detested their women, who, it would seem, are generally too servile of disposition successfully to command servants. Big Wang had made money in Tsingtao, but lost it all gambling. And then the Yellow River washed away his patrimony and he took to the wheelbarrow.

To encourage speed I challenged him to a walking race. He pushed the vehicle with its load of luggage, of course, while I walked unburdened. On we strode, over the green plain where farmers had dug trenches at the side of the road to prevent encroachment upon their grain, through villages hiding their filth under glorious trees which made them look at a little distance like fairy bowers. Dogs rushed at us, children ceased their shuttlecock games to follow us, peasants stared at us and asked our destination, the universal greeting of interior China.

When we had covered ten miles I realized my mistake. Here was the Jack Dempsey of the walking world. I was about to slacken when he offered to give me a boost on the barrow, this not to count against me in the race. Here he got my pride, and I refused to give in.

We had a slight rest in the village of "High Breasts," where we came across the celebrated old British "Pastor

40 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

Fei" recruiting coolies by means of his marvellous Chinese oratory in the temple square. "Fei Mu-sa"—even his countrymen rarely called him by other than his Chinese surname—was a character worth knowing, and millions of Shantungese must have had this privilege.

He was a missionary of the Anglican church who had been in the province for something like thirty years, and who had become more Chinese than western in his mentality. Between his priest's hat and priest's collar there beamed a round, red-nosed face which was like anything but the conventional priest's visage. From his fat lips there poured a never-ending stream of whimsical humor, and this, accentuated by the gestures of his short arms and stocky body and the comic limp of his "game" leg, won for him the instant goodwill of the Chinese.

"I have come," Fei Mu-sa told the crowd, "to tell you of an opportunity to see the world. Those of you who are able-bodied shall sail across two seas to the land where men look the opposite way from you to see the sky, where there are buildings as large as a walled village, in cities as clean as a threshing floor. You shall work there only one-third of each twenty-four hours, and each receive the pay of three men, while your families will be paid their food money each month here at home. You will be safe from danger, for iron monsters as large as three-beam houses will protect you. And when the great British King has won victory he will send you back to your homes with enough money to buy you each a new field, and a reputation which will make you esteemed of your neigh-

bors and posterity. All this I swear by my honor. If it is not true, when you come back, look me up."

There followed a multitude of questions, many difficult enough for a conscientious person to answer, but all cleverly handled by the jolly orator. And then he distributed leaflets in large and simple characters and advised the young men to present themselves at the nearest British medical station for inspection and enrollment.

The British War Office owed much of its success in getting trench-diggers from among Asia's strongest and most industrious people to Fei Mu-sa. When these men came back from their service at the most undesired tasks of the modern battlefield, with such money as they had received spent in gambling, and no funds save the remarkable collections of tales regarding the white man and his foibles with which they regaled crowds in their home province, old Fei Mu-sa nevertheless retained his popularity.

"A wonderful fellow," said one of them to me, "to have been able to get us into that."

Eventually most of the coolies went back to their villages or into mechanical trades in the cities. Others became soldiers or brigands, and still others rickshaw pullers in Shanghai.

By nightfall, Wang, the barrowman, and I, had gone the length of the county. I was glad to squat on the *kang* and have my food brought to me on a tray. Other guests came in, mostly foot-travellers with their bedding and

several extra pairs of cloth shoes on their backs; a group of grizzled home-comers from Manchuria, bearing in a tiny coffin the bones of a fellow-townsmen who had died during their wanderings; several itinerant merchants and a company of travelling actors, making the rounds of the market fairs; a district headman on his tax collecting rounds; an illicit drug peddler with a supply of "flour" and "molasses" (opium) and morphia needles; and several professional gamblers.

We all occupied a large room with two or three immense *kangs* on one side of the inn yard, which was the parking-space for litters, carts and barrows. On the other side were the stables—filled with braying animals—and the women's apartments, occupied by a highly-painted and coiffeured country lady on her annual visit to her parents. In the "honor suite" at the end of the inn was ensconced the county magistrate with his attendants, the only arrival in a sedan chair—but no longer the red chair of imperial days. He kindly invited me to share the suite with him, but I preferred my proletarian company as much the more interesting.

Sitting on the *kang* listening to their tales, I fell asleep. In the night I awoke with a chill, to find myself uncovered. The next morning I had every symptom of the influenza or "small plague" as the Chinese call it, though it has killed a million or two of them.

Wang insisted that I lie quiet, volunteering to go alone and fetch Yu. Two days later he brought Yu in on his barrow, and we lay side by side on the inn *kang*, recovering.

Yu told a harrowing tale of having been carried by his innkeeper to an isolated temple outside of the town wall to die. The man did not wish to assume the responsibility, very great in China, of a death in his hostelry.

As soon as we were able to travel on the barrow, we set out in a northeasterly direction for Tengchow, the fairy port on the Gulf where General Wu Pei-fu was born. Our route took us through the most prosperous part of Shantung, and one of the world's most productive agricultural districts, just then in the verdure of early spring. The horizon was always bounded by villages, nestling under their tree clumps, and between lay the wheat-covered plain, like a lawn stretching between hedgerows.

The same acreage which supports one American farm family, here supplies a village of two hundred souls with abundance of food, a modicum of the other necessities, and a few luxuries. Showing above the waving grain were grave parks, memorial arches to widows and scholars, and wayside shrines. Occasionally a mirage caused by the bright sun stood a village on its head, or turned wheat fields into lakes of rippling silver.

Peasants and their families working in the fields greeted us with the hearty, "Have you yet eaten?" or, "Whither bound—will you not pause awhile?" Toward meal time, which comes twice a day in Shantung, perhaps the man, perhaps the woman, maybe both, there being no division between household and field labor in the perfect democracy of peasant life, would take the road with us into the village to prepare their repast. And from every chow-

44 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

house on the village street would come the bellowed invitation, ending in the nasal "r" which the Shantungese incline to put upon the end of every phrase:

"*Ho i wan shui-er*" (Have a drink of water).

In any other province it would be tea, but the Shantungese drink much plain hot water or cereal coffee.

From Tengchow we headed due west toward the Yellow River delta. We were soon out of the fertile country and onto a barren tidal flat consisting alternately of salt marshes and gravel, broken at intervals by rocky crags, cause of strange tidal currents which at high water sometimes catch unwary travellers on the marshy roads. There is an occasional town of prosperous salt-gatherers, whose families have monopolized that industry for generations.

Usually the tide is depended upon to fill the huge drying vats, but here and there may be seen flocks of the strange windmill pumps used to raise the sea-water to the drying level. There are two or more ways of doing nearly everything—oftentimes one is as good as another—and in many instances Chinese culture has conventionalized the opposite way from that used by us. Chinese windmills, for instance, are set horizontally instead of perpendicularly with the earth, the sail arms standing up at right angles from the wheel. This is a great economy of construction over the Dutch windmill, requiring no high tower to allow the sail to clear the ground.

On the higher ground were heaps of the crude dried

salt, row upon row, protected by woven mats or a layer of mud, looking for all the world like the tents of a bivouacked army.

Nowhere is there a more upstanding, almost fiercely independent lot of people than these salt-makers of Shantung. Far back in Chinese history, the throne got possession of the salt industry as its special source of revenue. These men became in a sense the business assistants of the emperor, who levied a tariff on their output. About the time Columbus discovered America a minister of state who had risen from poverty in Shantung through the civil service saved the career of a Ming emperor. Asked what he would have as a reward, he requested tariff immunity on the output of the Shantung salt-makers, so that the people of his native province might have cheap salt.

This arrangement continued through the Ming dynasty and was respected by the alien Manchu dynasty which followed. Then came Yuan Shih-kai, and his foreign loan, secured upon the imperial salt revenue. As a result, foreigners—largely Britons—were put in charge of the revenue collections. These men had no respect for the old Ming emperor's concession. They were determined to enforce the impost equally upon all salt producing regions. Feeling over the matter was coming to a head when we arrived in the salt district.

A last touch of winter in the form of a blinding wet snow caught us as we set out for the barrowman's native village. Fighting our way over dry stream beds, often

46 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

losing the trail, we were overjoyed when, about sundown, we reached the shelter of the mud walls.

Our gratification subsided, however, when the only inn of the town refused us shelter. Big Wang found that we were suspected of being spies for the revenue collectors. A village commune meeting to discuss our arrival was called in the thatched-roof schoolhouse. We attended the gathering without invitation and endeavored to convince the elders that we were their friends, but only half-succeeded.

They would take us at our word, they said, but insisted that we pass on to the next village for the night. They were likewise unwilling that Wang, their fellow-townsmen, should escort us further, as it would appear to neighboring communes that they were not keeping faith in a pact which had been made against the foreigner.

They forced us out, by seeing to it that we could get no food or lodgings. There happened to be two strange barrowmen with a donkey in the village that night, who agreed to take us on to the next town, some eight miles away. However, they did not know the road. The elders then offered to give us guides. We would hardly have had the courage to go if Big Wang had not come to us secretly with the promise that he would escape from the village after we were gone, and overtake us.

A score of young braves armed with steel-pointed wooden pikes and huge paper lanterns saw us out of the town gate. We had gone scarcely twenty yards when their leaders stepped up and demanded two dollars each

for their services. When I grew indignant at their impudence, they scurried back into the village and closed the gate. I went back, knocked and yelled, but my clamor was ignored. We were abandoned on the freezing flats with no idea of our direction.

There was nothing for it, but to go on, taking whatever turnings most appealed to us. Often we had to lift the barrow over drifts. Our lanterns blew out. Once or twice we attempted to rouse householders in tiny unwallled settlements to ask for directions. In response I merely got shouted replies from the inside which in every case proved to be misdirections.

About midnight, we struck a canal, and took the narrow tow path along its side. Then the donkey stumbled and sprained its leg. The two barrowmen, who had alternated in teaming with the donkey, dropped to the ground absolutely fatigued. The cold was numbing us.

And then came the whoop of Big Wang, as sweet to our ears as the voice of an angel. His greeting was,

“You’re a sorry bunch.”

And without further words he roped the crippled burro onto one side of the barrow and sat the four of us on the other and wheeled the whole lot of us to the home of one of his friends in the nearest village.

Out of the salt area we stopped in a village to rest. One day a bleeding horse stumbled down the main street bearing a young, half-clothed foreigner.

“A crazy *yang-ren*,” shouted the tea-boy to me.

Going out, I recognized Weston, one of the two Ameri-

48 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

cans at that time in the salt revenue service. He had the wide-eyed look of a man who had received a tremendous surprise. Bit by bit I gathered that the Shantung salt workers, reinforced by peasants and armed with new Japanese rifles, had descended upon his station at Sheep-Horn Inlet on the mouth of the Yellow River, killed or bound his guards, looted his safe, put him astride a horse and fired a fusillade of shots above his head while he raced out of the country. The same thing had happened in every salt station for a considerable distance down the coast.

I sent the story of the Salt Rebellion to the press. Then I travelled with Weston to Chefoo where he put the situation before his superior, a big-hearted but bluff Britisher named Pearson.

My interview with this upholder of British prestige in Asia was one of the most interesting I have ever had. The first fifteen minutes Pearson did all the talking and all his words were bloody cuss-words. It was outrageous in his opinion for me to give publicity to an incident so damaging to the prestige of the foreign (British!) Salt Gabelle. And how, I asked him, after the torrent of abuse had run out, did he propose to meet the exigency?

He had arranged for a Chinese warship to come and blow Gold Harbor, one of the largest native ports, into fragments as a warning to the Chinese people of the dangers of listening to Japanese seduction or holding out for the prerogatives given them by a mediæval emperor.

The upshot of the matter was characteristic of the British genius in dealing with the Oriental.

Gold Harbor was laid in ruins and armed resistance thoroughly suppressed. Then, with a hearty expression of appreciation for the honesty of the mistaken natives whom it had been necessary to subdue, the Salt Inspectorate royally offered the Shantungese saltmakers a compromise. Today there are none of its revenues more sure than those it derives from Shantung.

But events in Shantung were side-shows to the Peking stage. The scene which Boss Twan was directing there was bringing to the limelight in rapid succession the principal characters of the drama.

V

THE "PEACE AND JOY" CLUB

DURING the developments which occupied me for two years in Shantung, Twan's government played with naïve recklessness at Peking. The Wall-Straddler Feng's retirement from the Presidency brought up once again the question of an occupant for the Yin Tai palace. Since parliament elects the chief executive, to make a president to order it was first necessary to make a parliament to order. The original parliament prorogued by President Li after its beating-up by Twan had gathered about Sun Yat-sen in Canton and ceased to be a factor in the main drama.

Instructions sent out to Twan's military brothers in the provincial capitals brought to Peking a new collection of professional politicians, landlords and merchants which would pass for a legislative body. Many of these men did not know whether they were destined for honor or execution. However, the political instinct native to all Chinese came to their rescue and they were soon playing their parts in Peking like veterans.



CHIEN MEN-LO

The famous landmark at "Front Gate" Railway Station, Peking.

A need was felt for some sort of Chinese Tammany Club to get the new M. P.'s organized to fulfil their calling. This matter Twan assigned to his young secretary, Hsu Shih-djeng, a small-boned chap with a lady-like face, Jewish nose, and unenviable college record, whose boundless energy, brazen nerve, and excellence in all the popular vices had raised him from the ranks. "Little" Hsu as he was familiarly known rented a compound between the Forbidden City and the parliament buildings, and fitted it up with banquet halls, opium dens and billiard tables. Parliamentarians and politicians were invited to make it their rendezvous.

There arose the matter of a name, all important in China. Twan and his most reliable henchmen were from the provinces of An-hwei and Fu-kien. *An* means "peace," and *Fu* "joy": both treasured characters. Here was a pretty circumstance, such as the Chinese love. The Club was dubbed "An-fu." Through its machinations these prized syllables gained a new meaning—as the synonym in Chinese history for tyranny and traitorism.

A certain Lo Jien-jang, who had been forced out of the government in far Shensi by a brigand named Chen whom I was later to meet, threatened the harmony of the Anfu clique. Secretary Hsu had a way of dealing with rebellion in the ranks. He invited Lo to a fashionable garden in Tientsin to talk matters over, took him out for a stroll after the feast and shot him dead there under the moon. The police arrested Hsu. But the next day, after

telegraphic communication with Twan, the prisoner was able to produce an antedated order from the Peking cabinet for the "private execution" of Lo.

There was another man whom Little Hsu thought similarly to dispose of. He was Chang Tso-lin, the King of Manchuria. Chang had been an outlaw whom the responsibility of success made into the defender of law and order: a process continually repeated. So far as he knows, he was stolen from a middle class Tientsin family when a child and reared by a bandit gang. "Chang" being as common as Smith with us, the lad's captors made the surest guess at his original surname when they dubbed him Chang. *Tso-lin*, appropriately enough, is "Spice-of-the-Forest."

As a boy of fifteen his native wit and quick tongue made him the leader of the outfit. Other bands were attracted by its success and it became a force to be reckoned with in the frontier country outside the Great Wall. Then came the Russo-Japanese war. Chang and his brigands rendered the Japanese valuable free-lance service in their campaign about Mukden.

When the war was over, the Japanese appealed to the viceroy of Manchuria, Hsu Shih-chang, in behalf of the bandit, and as a result he and his forces were regularized. From bandit to official is after all a step in promotion known in other politics than Chinese.

Following the revolution Chang gradually made himself supreme in Manchuria, showing such administrative and financial ability that his territory became one of the

most prosperous in Asia, and he himself the master of a great private fortune. He employed instructors to teach him the manners of gentility, grew long finger nails, and had himself adopted, for a consideration to the heirs, into the line of a good but decayed family, so that he might have ancestral graves at which to worship just as any fellow-countryman of blood.

Little Hsu went up to Mukden and laid a plot for the assassination of Chang. That ex-bandit proved, however, altogether too wily for him, and the killer was glad to slink back to Peking with his own life. Chang might have pursued him, but he masterfully bided his time. For he excels even more than most Chinese in that ability to defer revenge which is one of the attributes of political greatness.

In due time the Anfu parliament chose as President the former viceroy of Manchuria, Hsu Shih-chang, an old mandarin of noble appearance but mercenary heart who could be counted upon to obey orders. There was in this the seed of trouble, however. For *Lao* "Old" Hsu, as he came to be known in distinction from "Little" Hsu, his dominating lieutenant, was the man who, as viceroy, had been the predecessor and patron of Chang Tso-lin. The time-serving old scholar was henceforth destined to toast in the fires of their mutual hate.

Parliament, having filled the function for which it was created, was merely in the way. Various ruses to get rid of it were tried, the most successful ultimately proving to be the neglect to pay its salaries. Those members

54 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

of nobler stuff went home, disgusted. The remainder who importunately stayed on were appointed with unconscious irony "Advisers on Public Economy," with nothing to do but draw two hundred dollars a month each for doing nothing.

Boss Twan's most spectacular stage-play was the grandiose attempt to conquer the rebellious provinces south of the Yangtze, which since Tsai Ao's rebellion against Yuan had never resumed allegiance to Peking. But the provincial military chieftains or tuchuns who set out with great flourish leading large armies were glad to get back with whole skins to their tables and concubines, leaving their stricken troops to straggle along as best they could.

Only in the province of Hunan was the story different. There a young Shantungese Division Commander named Wu Pei-fu, veteran of campaigns as far apart as Burma and Korea, was sweeping all opposition before him, dislodging the southern armies from position after position by his brilliant strategy. And when he had conquered the province, he turned about to find that Peking had placed his most bitter enemy over it and over him.

The enmity between Wu Pei-fu, poet-soldier, and Chang Chin-yao, the Varus of China's official extortioners, began over a typical Chinese "face affair." Wu, as a graduate cadet from the Kaiping Military Academy, the successor to Yuan Shih-kai's Paoting school, was assigned to the corps of this Chang, then being formed for the purpose of attacking the south. Usually silent, blunt

when he spoke, genial, but with no time for light talk or pleasures, giving himself to military study, poetry and philosophical research, he was disgusted alike with his commander's cruelty, licentiousness and physical and mental incapacity. For Chang was so beefy that he was almost unable to walk. Wu gave way to an expression of his feelings in a bit of doggerel which I liberally translate:

One sure good thing at last our Chang will do.
 Although of merit he may show a dearth
 Note this, ye gods, and give him what is due—
 His fat will fertilize a *mo* of hungry earth.¹

Which, of course, was carried to the portly Chang. His rage was intense, but the code of "face" demanded a retaliation in kind before he might avail himself of his privileged position to take more vindictive measures. He sent back to the scrawny young captain the following reply:

The peasants use good rags to make scarecrows.
 Why should this be, when everybody knows
 A braggart² whose spare bones rattle like a bell
 Would serve the purpose every bit as well?

¹ The character for the surname "Chang" also means "long." Wu made a play on this in his second line, which read literally, "Although of merit he may be short." The *mo* is a Chinese land measure, from $\frac{1}{6}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ acre according to locality.

² The character for the surname "Wu" has a classical meaning of "brawl" or "brag." The oblique attack through a play on words is prized in Chinese satire.

Wu gathered the threat implied in the reply, but could think of no means of saving himself. His desertion would have given Chang the very opportunity which he desired. Then it happened that Tsao Kun, the military lord of the metropolitan province of Chihli, heard of the tilt at verse. The young officer's satire on his fat brother commander rather appealed to Tsao's sense of humor. Appreciating the danger Wu must be in, Tsao requested the transference of Wu to his own Chihli corps. Chang, although displeased that Wu should thus escape from his hand, dared not refuse the more powerful Tsao.

In this ludicrous manner Tsao and Wu became patron and protégé—an incident destined to determine the current of Chinese history and the campaigning of hundreds of thousands of troops.

They have remained faithful to this relation which requires that neither shall ever repudiate the other in public affairs, although it has meant for Tsao an unwilling participation in two wars and for Wu an unwilling acquiescence in Tsao's presidency and policies far from his ideals. For the sake of it he today bears the opprobrium of the world, and because of it "Daddy" Tsao is today the central figure in what gives promise of being the closing act in the Comedy of Errors known as the Chinese Republic.

Under the stress of battle, I later had occasion to observe the personal affection involved in their relation.

VI

YOUTH REBELS

SUMMER is the season of action in the Chinese play; so in winter, king and politicians hibernate, but as the warm weather approaches, they go out to war. It was in the summer of 1916 that Yuan Shih-kai came to his end. In the summer of 1917, Chang Hsun played his little farce. In the summer of 1918, the Anfu Club rose to power; in the summer of 1919 it was overthrown by the student revolution and the campaign of General Wu Pei-fu which followed.

Each summer since, an act has been added to the play, but the one of 1919 furnishes the relief of nobler drama to a monotony of farce.

In the spring of that year, Chinese who followed world events were aroused by the news that the victorious powers were ratifying Japanese acquisitions in Shantung, and that corrupt officials in Peking were on the point of acquiescing. America alone stood as the friend of patriotic Chinese, and this in a dubious sense, insofar as fitted with American political opportunism.

Teachers and students in the middle and higher schools in Shantung forwarded an appeal to their confrères in the capital to endeavor to win the sympathy of the foreign plenipotentiaries for China's claim. The Peking student-body, roused by disclosures of official treachery made by a few patriots in the Ministry of Education, sent back word that they were planning a patriotic mass-demonstration. They asked that a delegation of Shantung students be present to witness the effort. I was invited to accompany the delegates. With some regret I doffed the Chinese apparel which I had worn constantly in Shantung, and which from the standpoint of comfort, protection, and dignity is the most civilized, in my opinion, of the many types of costume evolved by mankind. I have since missed the joy, unknown to the western male for a century, of wearing beautiful fabrics and inspiring colors. My Chinese clothing, which made me one of the multitude in Shantung, would have marked me out in the more cosmopolitan capital.

I arrived in Peking on the morning set for the demonstration, and took as an observation post the roof of Lowry Hall of Peking Christian University in the southeast corner of the northern city. The ancient capital in all its morning splendor lay at our feet. I shall never forget the impression of majesty made by the spacious courts and avenues, the heavy walls, the sweep of glazed-tile roofs, the massive towers, the spreading trees. We were looking northward up the great avenue popularly known as Hata Gate Street, when we saw the long procession of boy and

girl students, flying white banners, coming in our direction.

"Let's go down and join them," said my companions.

We fell in as the parade crossed the *glacis* surrounding the turreted walls of the legation quarter. At the gates the marchers were stopped by the foreign-officered Chinese Legation Police. Interested parties, it seems, had been forewarned as to the intended protest and had contrived to have the parade ruled out of the Legation Quarter on the ground that it was too large a company to admit to the narrow streets within.

Frustrated in their purpose to demonstrate peacefully before the American and Allied Legations, the youthful crowd swayed back across the *glacis*.

A cry went up, "Let's call on Tsao Ru-lin!"

Tsao, a little Cantonese, Minister of Finance and Communications, with a fellow provincial, Lu Chung-yu, Chief of the Currency Bureau, and Chang Tsung-hsiang, Chinese minister to Tokio, were accused by the students of being the three outstanding Anfu traitors in the dealing with Nishihara whereby Chinese sovereignty and resources were being bartered for Japanese money. Moved with one impulse, the 20,000 students made their way back to Hata Gate Avenue, and into the narrow *hutung* upon which stood the walled gardens and rockery containing Tsao Ru-lin's mansion.

We went along, swept forward by the crowd.

A delegation of six or eight students stepped into the gate-house and respectfully asked for an interview with the minister. They were thrown out and the gates locked.

60 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

Then the crowd stormed the place. With improvised battering rams, the gates were burst open. It chanced that the notorious three were just arriving by another entrance for rendezvous. Lu fled to his home, Tsao, more hotly pursued, scaled the back wall and took refuge in the Japanese hospital.

The boys captured Chang and treated this minister of state to a little college discipline; tossing him in a blanket and ducking him in the goldfish pond. In the course of the scrimmage, his arm was broken. Tsao's furniture was considerably damaged and one of his out-buildings accidentally set on fire.

Retainers sent out a call for help. The fire-department came first, put out the fire, and then turned its hoses on the crowd. The students rushed the firemen, wrested the hoses from them and chased them up the street at the point of their own nozzles. Then a company of gendarmes, with bayonets fixed, came up the *hutung* on the double quick.

I withdrew rapidly in the opposite direction. It is one of my principles as a newspaper man that a reporter is no good if he doesn't live to tell his story, and here was a story I very much wanted to tell.

A score of the young men were taken into detention. The injured officials, encouraged by their Anfu cronies, Twan excepted, called for a mandate of decapitation. The old boss himself appeared more amused than indignant over their discomfiture. The President hesitated to take such a drastic step, head-lobbing having been

theoretically abolished with the monarchy. As a time-serving measure he bestowed orders of merit upon the notorious ones by way of amends for indignities suffered.

Meanwhile the news reached every university, college, and middle school from the Pacific Ocean to Tibet and from Mongolia to Burma, by wire or by that wireless—highly developed in China—known as gossip. Class fellow-feeling, always so strong among Chinese, aroused students of other cities. Furthermore the fate of these boys who faced death at the hands of traitorous mandarins furnished a concrete issue about which patriotism could rally.

Within a day's time, organizations known as the Students' Unions were formed. Pupils of girls' schools and even children of the intermediate and primary schools were enrolled. Students, with the acquiescence of their teachers, cut their classes and devoted themselves to street-speaking campaigns. In Peking, delegations several hundred strong waited upon the President and Premier and begged not so much for the lives of their comrades as for the preservation of the integrity of their country.

The police were ordered to arrest demonstrators and street-speakers. However, when they took one student, they were confronted by ten who, equipped with blankets and food, demanded the privilege of suffering incarceration with their comrade on the ground that they were equally guilty. One may frequently hear of people trying to escape from jail, but the sight of persons forcing their

62 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

way into jail is rare. Soon prisons overflowed. Attempt was made to turn schools into detention camps, but students won over their soldier guards.

The delegations of boys and girls were so persistent that they kept both President and bodyguards in virtual imprisonment behind the lacquered doors of the "Heavenly Gate." The Anfu politicians determined on relentless violence. Soldiers were ordered to hew a way through the living hedges about government offices and official residences. They obeyed. I helped pick up the pieces.

The students then appealed to the merchants and artisans. The response of the guilds settled the question of whether China can be united or not, at least where national independence and integrity of culture are at stake—for Japan was hated *most*, perhaps for her attempt to substitute her own for a native culture in Shantung and Korea. Fired by the fervor of boys and girls, merchants and guilds through chambers of commerce in every city decided to close shop, though at enormous loss, till the government should undertake the cause of its people. Result—a national strike that has never been equalled in history. It was passive resistance in a most powerful form.

Never was governing clique more surprised than the mandarinat at Peking. Here was something it couldn't combat with armies. Some attempt was made to force open shops at the point of the bayonet, but it was ineffective, ludicrous. More and more of the police

and army were infected with students' propaganda. For three days, in all the vast realm, one could not buy food, get a shave, change money, or procure hot water. Even the beggars and thieves are said to have suspended operations.

Every department of the government found itself paralyzed. Forced to take action, President Hsu dismissed the three most notorious ministers, rescinded their orders of merit and issued mandates ordering them to stand trial. The Cabinet granted an assurance to the people that never would the Peking Government acquiesce in the Shantung disposition made at Paris, and that the traitorous agreements made with Japan would not be ratified. And the students who lay in prison under threat of execution were given official apologies and escorted to their homes under guards of honor.

The students had won but they did not stop with this victory. They realized that the government had changed its attitude under compulsion, not conviction, and would readily swing back when the immediate exigency was passed. Also, they felt that to check Japanese intrigue against Chinese sovereignty, they would have to strike not only at their own faithless officials, but at Japan as well.

The students were aware of the secret pacts wherein, by one signature of a corrupt and probably illegal minister, Chinese arsenals were turned over to Japanese management, and her army to Japanese officers. They knew that Twan Chi-sui himself, under the naïve pretext of naval

64 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

disarmament then being talked of in the western world, had arranged to turn China's navy into a private fishing fleet, under a Japanese-controlled company. And they were aware that upon all of these concessions, Japan had paid millions of dollars which had gone into the pockets of the Anfu clique. Only a drastic lesson could teach Japan's militarists that the people of China would never allow her to realize upon the bribes. Therefore the students called for the boycott of all things Japanese, and enlisted in its support the merchants and guilds, just as in the general strike.

The ban on things Japanese was partly under way before this conscious objective offered itself. It began in Shanghai, and with that object of humorous attack in the West, the straw hat. The straw headpiece was the obvious Japanese-made article on the streets. Patriots made hat-smashing a point of virtue, and the daily bag was posted each evening. Frequent incidents, mostly comic, some ugly, occurred, while straw wearers, without regard to color or creed, were being deprived of their headgear. There was a tremendous boom in British- and American-made hats, while the straw-braid industry in Shantung discovered that it could make its own finished product instead of relying on Japanese factories—a development indicative of what was to happen in many other more important lines of goods.

In Shanghai, where there is a foreign-controlled settlement, and the Japanese are represented on the Municipal Council, the demonstrators and boycotters ran up against

foreign as well as native officialdom. Although petty regulations hindering their activities were passed, they diplomatically avoided the hostility of the foreign authorities, making exceptions for Shanghai in their program to avoid such conflict. Yet moral force made the boycott so effective even here that Japanese steamships came and went empty from the Whampoo, while the Japanese government paid their deficits.

The students, once they saw their aims clearly, accomplished a national organization with headquarters in Shanghai. Thereafter all local unions could be circularized within an hour by telegraph, and a demonstration could be got under way in every provincial center, as well as in foreign cities like Tokyo, where a large Chinese Students' Union had been formed. Officials found it exceedingly precarious to use violent methods against the demonstrators, who, likely as not, were the children of the very men upon whose support they depended for their own position.

Some parental effort at suppression was made, and the ex-bandit Tuchun Chen of Shensi spanked with his good right hand the hundred odd pupils of his private school in Sianfu. It was difficult for parents, no matter how much involved in politics, to admit to their own children that they were against the cause of patriotism; and in the case of college and university students parental control was usually weakened by distance.

The participation of girl students equally with the boys was scandal to the conservatives—particularly to those

whose interests stood to suffer. The Confucian code teaches that a woman must not hand an article to or receive it from a man directly. Yet so sincere were both boys and girls in their idealistic fervor that there was no instance where advantage was taken of the unusual commingling, even in all-night street sieges of recalcitrant yamens.

The student movement became a convenient vehicle for the woman's emancipation cause and the girls of the higher schools threw themselves into it with fervor, having a double end to gain. These girls organized their own student unions, published their own organs and delegated committees to sit jointly with the boys. In Peking, when locked up by their preceptors in the Normal School, they broke through the great compound gates and rejoined the boys.

The mental exhilaration of the young women began to show external effects: pantaloons became shorter—even showing the garter and a dimpled brown knee; hair was bobbed western fashion; jackets were made to fit more snugly than ever. Girls claimed the right to go about unescorted and society was surprised to find that they could do so without molestation. Mixed audiences of students attended the lectures of Bertrand Russell, John Dewey, Margaret Sanger, and Abraham Joffe. There was a flare-up against all organized religion, which, however, proved ephemeral. The girls' student unions denounced concubinage and selection of mates by the elders and in this the boys joined. A large number of

betrothal pacts were declared "off" by the affected young persons, to the great embarrassment of their parents. Several betrothed young men and women committed suicide as a protest against the system. A few of the more emancipated initiated a new form of marriage by consent, which was named the "Bertrand Russell Marriage."

The most significant permanent effect was the opening of the higher schools to co-education. After their patriotic stand with the boys the school-girls walked right into the classrooms at the National University, and there was no one to say them nay.

In the cities, students harangued the artisans' and laborers' guilds and established reading rooms where they read and interpreted the news to the illiterate. In the country they circulated about the village fairs and thundered against the designs of Japanese militarists and against the weakness and corruption of their own government.

Students went through self-inflicted ordeals to dispel public apathy. In Peking a young man who had received a bayonet cut in endeavoring to present a petition to the president, starved himself to death in a government hospital. Young women placed their bodies in front of soldiers' bayonets while their boy associates passed by. In several instances casualties occurred, but carving up defenseless girls was usually too much for even soldiers to stomach. In Tientsin a youth stood before the delegates of the merchants' guilds in the Y. M. C. A. auditorium

and slashed his jugular vein with a teacup; in a voice that grew weaker as his life blood reddened the stage he impassionately pleaded with them to continue the boycott although for many it meant financial ruin. Self-immolation is effective in China for probably the same psychological reasons that it is in Ireland. It appeals to a soft-hearted and sympathetic people, with an acute sensitiveness to injustice, and a tendency to think in personalities rather than principles.

The plea of the students was greatly strengthened by reckless Japanese conduct in Shantung and the ruthless methods of suppression used against Korean independents at the time. Posters were circulated showing Korean men being crucified and women buried alive, with the significant caption:

“They suffer for our warning.”

Japanese authorities made strong demands upon the Chinese government for the suppression of this “campaign of hate.” When Chinese officials went before the students in Tientsin and stated their actual fear of Japanese reprisals, the students coöperated. But their wit gave them an alternative against which the Japanese were helpless to complain, and yet which made them more than ever a laughing-stock.

The Chinese name for Japan is “Jih-Ben,” or “Sun-rising,” and is commonly abbreviated into “Jih,” with a primary meaning of just “sun.” As the hot months came on, the students circulated thousands of “health” leaflets warning against the poisonous rays of the Eastern Sun, and

describing in rich allegorical language which everyone knew referred to Japan, the dangers of "sun-stroke."

Portentous warnings in the form of oblique humor took hold of the Chinese mind. In a few weeks every Chinese of the coastal provinces from beggar to sage was thoroughly aroused. Even the far interior was affected. The one topic in coolie gangs, where there is always much talk, was Japan. They soon borrowed the fire of the students.

It is the custom of Chinese glaziers to scribble with chalk over a new window to warn the unaccustomed of its presence and keep him from walking through it. Wherever a new plate glass appeared on the streets of one of the ports it invariably bore the legend in an almost illiterate hand: "This was put here to stop the poisonous rays of the sun!" Printers would not use Japanese paper, or else took care to spoil the job they did on it, artisans refused to build with Japanese materials, merchants refused to accept delivery of goods, of whatever origin, transported on Japanese ships or railroads. Rich men withdrew their money from Japanese banks.

Beggars even threw back Japanese money at the alms-giver!

The alert Chinese sense of justice had rebelled at the thought that boys and girls should suffer for having wished to save their country. Their physical abnegation won for them, even where their ideals were little understood. That three days' strike marked the beginning of China's modern history. Then for the first time, guilds and

70 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

occupational bodies projected themselves into politics on a national scale.

It was the students who awoke them to political responsibility and first coördinated their action. The effect will ultimately be a new ruling class in a renewed China.

√II

THE BATTLE AGAINST REACTION

THE political drama had been suddenly overwhelmed by the rush of young and unconventional feet onto the stage. But the old actors soon recovered their *sang-froid*. The scene of their last direct effort to get rid of the new participants was Tientsin, the great commercial mart and cosmopolitan city of the north.

The real strength of the students was in their influence with the Chambers of Commerce—institutions of far greater power than the merchants' organizations which we know in this country. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce, which is really the administrative organ of the united guilds, has jurisdiction over all business conducted in its city. With the decline of official prestige, it is taking over police and magisterial authority, and is the standard bearer in China's political progress.

The Chambers had already prohibited the selling of Japanese goods in stock upon penalty of fine, and for repetition of the offense, of closure. The students acted, by relays, as spies for the Chambers. Finally they

decided upon the extreme measure of destroying all "degraded goods," as Japanese merchandise had been dubbed.

I was at this time in Tientsin, having dropped down after the Peking demonstration to take charge of the *North China Star*, whose light was flickering under the care of an emergency editor. Daily, out in the Chinese city, I saw carts pulled by oxen or mules, going from shop to shop under escort of students, gathering up retail stocks of Japanese products: cotton cloths, leather goods, soaps, perfumes and cosmetics, drugs, hardware, jewelry, watches and clocks, hospital supplies, thermos bottles, matting, headwear, toys, and many other things, and taking them in heaped-up loads to the bonfire which was kept burning day and night in one of the large plazas. Many of the merchants threw on their goods in willing and fervid sacrifice, most others yielded gracefully before the intense popular feeling. But there were some who felt that in withdrawing these stocks from sale they had done enough. Their disaffection and wrangling with the students gave the mandarins a longed-for opportunity to intervene.

The governor of the province, Tsao Rui, generally known as "The Lady" for his "sissy" habits and dependence upon his gruff brother, Tsao Kun, issued an order outlawing the student unions. Some representatives of the Tientsin union who came frequently to my office told me of a delegation which was calling at the governor's palace that afternoon to present the patriotic purposes of the

union and beg for rescinding of the order. I immediately set out and overtook it.

We crossed the pontoon bridge to the north city, over the ancient fork of the Grand Canal which the enterprising police magistrate, Yang I-deh, was filling at public expense and selling off as city lots for the benefit of his own pocket. On the opposite bank stood the governor's yamen, surrounded by a double wall.

The students applied for admission. A rough guard stationed at the gate offered to admit a small delegation. Six boy and two girl volunteers stepped forward and the gates were clapped shut on them. We awaited their return—one hour, two hours. Someone, possibly a sympathetic soldier, slipped a note under the gates, stating that the delegation had been imprisoned.

The students, after clamoring in vain, attacked the gates. Finally they dislodged the large beam which formed the threshold. Several squirmed under. They were promptly rendered unconscious by the butts of the guards' rifles. Others, pushing the inert bodies of their comrades ahead of them, repeated the attempt. One succeeded in getting through and unbolting the gates. There were about twenty guards. Twenty bayonets thrust through twenty young bodies were held for a moment. The hundred or more remaining students swept over the soldiers, seized the guns, and threw them over the wall into the canal. On they rushed, through the inner gate and into the governor's quarters, while "Lady" Tsao was making a hasty exit from the rear.

The students found their comrades in an inner compound, where they had been incarcerated, following a noisy interview in which they had pointed out too plainly the difference between the governor's patriotism and their own. Then the visitors returned, gathered up their dead and wounded, commandeered carriages and rickshaws, and took them to one of the schools of the city, which they turned into a hospital, medical school students acting as surgeons and nurses.

The bodies of the dead were laid out and exhibited to the tens of thousands who flocked to the place. Boy Scout troops patrolled the neighborhood and kept the crowd from the bedsides of the sufferers. Public opinion ran so high that Tsao dared make no attempt to enforce his order—in fact it was some days before he ventured back to his yamen.

The example of organization shown by the students affected other classes. There was a desire for the formation of a strictly patriotic society distinct from the guilds to meet the temporary exigency. Thirty thousand citizens of all vocations met in the football field of the Nankai Christian College and formed the People's Union. A regiment of troops were sent to surround the assembly. They impotently stood about the fringes of the crowd while its business went on. Motions and nominations made near the platform were relayed through the assembly by speakers with megaphones. A constitution was adopted and officers elected. The soldiers were invited to join, and many responded. Then the assembly

turned into a parade and marched for half a day through the great thoroughfares of the city.

Subsidiary organizations known as the Ten Men Groups Societies were created under the People's Union. These groups, with ten men pledged to obey a leader, provided a constancy of morale and high mobility which were tried out when, at the climax of the "student revolution," the popular organizations took from the police authorities for three days the control of the great northern trade mart.

Yang I-deh, police chief mentioned before, rose from the underworld through service to the police force of the Japanese concession (settlement). During the early years of the Great War, he had been so manifestly pro-German, that the British, American, and French Consuls had brought about his removal from office. Immediately Tientsin was overrun with lawless elements (many of them, so rumor said, of intimate connection with the deposed Yang) and even foreign business suffered to such an extent that these same consuls were glad to acquiesce in the polite Japanese suggestion that Yang be reinstalled. Naturally Yang was obliged to do all in his power to suppress the anti-Japanese movement. Under pressure from his patrons he arrested eighteen of the leaders in the Students' and People's unions.

Two hundred students followed these men to prison demanding to be arrested along with them. At the great front door they rushed the guards, and settled themselves in the court between the wings of the building, outside their comrades' cells.

76 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

Groups of ten began to arrive outside the building, bringing food and blankets. Yang, looking out from his second story balcony, grew more and more alarmed. Squad by squad he drew in his police from the streets and stationed them about headquarters. The students realized that an outbreak would discredit them. Their leaders quickly mustered the Boy Scout organizations of the schools and as fast as the police left a district, boys in uniform took it over, their long poles substituting effectively for the batons of the conventional guardians of the peace.

By nightfall twenty thousand people besieged the police yamen. It was one of the strangest gatherings of humanity ever seen. In the weird light of paper lanterns decorated with patriotic slogans, Chinese of every station and age, and both sexes, dressed in the silk gown of the scholar, the linen gown of the merchant, the denim trousers of the coolie, or the tight-fitting European clothes of the foreign bank clerk, reclined or sat upon their pallets, which were placed edge to edge across the great plaza, over the street-car lines, up the bund in both directions, into all the tortuous side alleys and across the steel bridge to the Austrian concession.

Hot water vendors picked their way through, filling the teapots which stood with tiny porcelain bowls on every pallet. Now and then orators arose under the flare of bulrush torches to harangue the crowd or lead in singing patriotic anthems. In the center of this sea of humanity, holding with thin lines a hollow square

炸藥張道遠文也斷廣營衆圍後軍市府政制
影攝戰旗內財先外對義主產均府政制



THE TIENTSIN BASTILE UNDER SIEGE BY STUDENTS AND POPULACE

about the bastille, and menaced by two hundred prisoners in their rear, were the uniformed and white-legged police of Chief Yang. On the fringes of the permanent crowd were groups that came and went, stretching off into the dimly lighted portions of the native city.

A thrilling sight it was, portentous to a westerner. In this vast mob of Orientals, appalling for very numbers, had gathered those who but a few hours before were docile students at their desks, affable clerks at their counters, crafty merchants in their offices, sedate scholars in their libraries, pampered men of wealth waited on by retinues of servants and concubines in their parlors: now they had become a grim mass sitting together on the ground in the democracy of a common purpose; a crowd normally more interested in the peaceful pursuit of gain than an ideal but suddenly become oblivious of material things—naturally orderly but ready to resort to frenzied actions.

I wanted to see how Chief Yang was taking it. Thinking the approach from the Austrian side might be the least densely blocked, I motored around through the French, Russian and Italian concessions, and alighted at the foreign end of the bridge, where the street-cars were compelled to stop. I found the bridge cleared and patrolled by Boy Scouts, who had decided that the weight of humanity was perilous, and would allow no one to step upon the structure.

A glib tongue is usually a sesame for every barrier in

78 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

China, but these boys had no respect for my linguistic abilities. I made a break to run across, but found myself securely imprisoned between the pikes of the scouts. In this predicament I bethought me to ask for an acquaintance, a leader in the student movement. A scout was detailed to take me to him. We found my friend in a sort of field headquarters set up around a telephone pole in the midst of the besieging mob. I told him that I desired to get through to interview Yang.

"Go on," he said. "Find out if Yang means to capitulate or resort to force. You will have to crawl over the crowd as best you can. When they stop you tell them you are on an errand for the students."

Stepping over, between, sometimes on people, I finally reached the police lines. Explanation that I had come to get an interview for a foreign paper served to get me through and into the upholstered office upstairs where Yang paced to and fro. He is short and slight, with refined-looking face and hands, but possessed of a coarse, unrestrained speech which betrays common breeding. His every action from his moustache twirling to his Napoleonic posturing displays a pompous egotism. Withal he is one of the shrewdest schemers in China, and China possesses 400,000,000 of the shrewdest human beings on earth.

I followed Yang out onto the iron balcony. Major Lu, one of the Chief's aides, was there. He is a graduate of an American University who dresses like a movie actor and is commonly known about Tientsin as "Lulu."

Major Lu gazed in a bored way over the crowd, without a suggestion to offer from his contact with western democracy.

A sudden commotion below the balcony attracted our attention. We saw a carriage trying to force its way through the crowd. The coachman was pulled off his seat. The inmates of the carriage essayed to get down, but were pushed back, as the crowd headed the horses about and drove them off. Soon a policeman came up to report to the chief.

"The Japanese consul endeavored to reach here in his carriage," he said, "but he was driven away by the mob."

Yang listened, twisting his moustache. He turned to me.

"What would you do with these people?" he asked. "I know what would happen in your country—a police head like me would turn the machine guns on them. Yet over here you white men side against me. Well, I'll show you my nature. I have sent for the heads of the Chamber of Commerce to come and mediate between me and this mob. I am inclined to be very humane. You see" (resorting to a phrase used only by uneducated Chinese) "my bowels are very long,—are they not?"

"I should say rather that your head is very long," I replied, as I bowed myself out.

A few minutes later I had told my student friend that the issue was peace, and at 2.30 in the morning

80 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

I was back in the news room, writing the story for which the pressmen were holding open the forms.

On the third day, after lengthy negotiations through the elders, Yang released his student prisoners, and the besieging mob escorted them off in triumph, leaving heaps of peanut and pumpkin-seed shells and torn papers for Yang's police to clean up.

This student revolution had proved its power. The Tientsin incident convinced the old actors in the drama that they could not merely hustle the new participants off the stage. So they changed policy, and with diabolical cleverness began plotting to absorb them into their own unholy play.

Politicians pretended conversion to student ideals, and sympathy with certain groups while injecting feelings of rivalry toward other groups. Student organizations were compromised with contributions from doubtful sources to their campaign chests. Individuals were enticed by visions of power and wealth. Students, intoxicated by success, were led to take steps which weakened their influence among the people. Chief Yang was even able to enjoy a measure of revenge by jailing a few extremists who were left unprotected by the revulsion of feeling.

"Lady" Tsao and Chief Yang prevailed upon the head of the Chamber of Commerce in Tientsin to break with the students in return for their own support. To the present day the Tientsin chamber is, as a result, supreme in municipal affairs, and Chief Yang has discovered that he chose

a strict task-master. But the students were thus let out of public affairs.

Anyhow, the crisis had passed. Japan's pressure was lifted. China's sovereignty had been preserved. There was a general feeling that the students should go back to their books, and a general desire to shelve the troublesome secondary movements which threatened to follow in the wake of the students' patriotic efforts, such as the woman question and new forms of class consciousness.

The movement accomplished its intent. With its backing, Dr. C. T. Wang and his patriotic associates could refuse to sign the treaty at Paris. The corrupt government at Peking was compelled to default upon the contracts it had made with the Japanese War Office for the Japanization of the Chinese army. Japan was taught that the Chinese people have a method of retaliation which can bring her business and government to the verge of bankruptcy, costing her far more than she is willing to risk in the hope of reimbursement through the military policy.

The students of China had a large part in convincing the statesmen and people of Japan of the necessity for modifying their government's imperialism on the continent, thus bringing about the most radical change in Far Eastern politics of recent years, and making possible a feeling of trust between Japan and America. The Chinese students saved China. But we Americans were too busy with the squabbles of Europe to comprehend that in the same stroke, by defeating the world-power schemes of the Japanese militarists and snatching from their grasp

82 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

control of the man-power of China, they saved us also from a real yellow peril and another war.

Many are disappointed that having tided China over her international crisis, the students did not carry out a national housecleaning. That was too much to expect. Even the students of China must be subject to the slow-moving laws of political evolution. Today the Student Unions are disbanded. Yet evidences of the self-sacrifice and self-discipline learned in 1919 still exist.

When the floods threatened to wipe out a community in the neighborhood of Tientsin not long ago, and thousands of hired workmen had given up in despair the battle against the raging waters, college students heard of the situation, dropped their studies, and went out in the face of death to fight with pick and shovel until they had conquered the destroyer. Today it is the students who compel the military to disgorge enough money to pay their teachers' salaries and keep the higher educational institutions of China open.

On the gate-arch of the Peking National University, situated in what were once pleasure gardens of the Son of Heaven, is the sign hanging side-by-side with the name of the University: "Volunteer School for the Poor." When the great class rooms of this most significant educational institution on the continent of Asia are emptied for the day, they are refilled with the dirty children of the streets, and the students become teachers.

The spirit of the revolution is dormant but still alive, as any power or combination of powers that has the temer-

ity to challenge the Chinese self-respect and instinct of self-preservation will discover. Meanwhile, Americans may thank the boys and girls of China that the Pacific, due to no sacrifice and little sympathy of theirs, remains true to its name.

VIII

WU'S "STRATEGIC RETREAT"

WU PEI-FU and his subordinate Feng Yu-hsiang (who had become a convert to Christianity with original ideas of how a man of his station might live it out) sat on the frontier in Hunan and watched the show. Wu was rapidly moving to a mental position beyond that of the students—where he felt that Chinese self-respect demanded not only the checking of the Japanese but the ousting of his own government in Peking. It was incompatible with Wu's self-respect to take orders from his old enemy the fat Chang Chin-yao, who ruled in Changsha, the provincial capital, and brazenly milked the great province of its wealth. Wu and Feng would not allow Chang's maladministrators and extortioners in the territory occupied by their troops, and virtually created a little independent kingdom in their neighborhood where justice and order were maintained.

"Fat" Chang established a provincial bank which gathered in the silver of the province and issued paper in return. He deposited the bullion to his private account

in a Japanese bank, while his paper currency steadily depreciated. He kidnapped wealthy men and held them for ransom in the governor's palace. He enticed farmers to dig up their crops and plant poppy, or compelled them to do so by levying an acre tax which no crop but poppy would pay. When the poppy was ripe his minions descended upon the farmers and confiscated their crops and often their land as well, on the pretext of enforcing the anti-opium laws. He levied such heavy tribute on rice, which he sold to Japanese in spite of the national prohibition upon rice export, that this richest rice-producing area in the world faced famine. In the face of such treatment by the appointee of Peking, no wonder the Hunanese longed for the return of the southern revolutionary armies, which were destructive, but by far the lesser of the two evils.

Chang Chin-yao was not sure enough of his army to challenge Wu directly, but he found a way to make Wu's position impossible—a dangerous way as it turned out for it reacted upon his own head. The monthly remittance for Wu's division passed through Chang's hands. He received it in silver but forwarded it on to Wu in his worthless paper currency. After a few months of this, Wu announced in the summer of 1920 that he found it necessary to make a strategic retreat. He wisely equipped himself for such a move by first borrowing ammunition from his erstwhile opponents, the southern forces, who, thanks to Sun Yat-sen's skill in collecting money from overseas Chinese, were well supplied.

86 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

The southern army, of course, followed immediately in Wu's wake, obliterating every vestige of Chang's power as it went. Transporting his artillery down the river by sampan, and taking his men overland by forced marches, Wu reached the railhead at Changsha before the fat tuchun realized what was happening. Wu did not stop to dispute Chang's authority in the provincial capital. He took his ten thousand men through in the night, commandeering, however, every available railroad car to transport them to Hankow, and leaving Chang at the mercy of the avenging southerners.

A coward as well as a tyrant, Chang made no attempt at resistance, although his army was twice as large as that which under Wu had driven back the southern tide. He flooded the wires with sob-telegrams imploring Peking to compel Wu Pei-fu to return to his defense. His last act was typical: as the southern army approached, he seized the leading merchants and bankers and compelled them to deliver up their liquid funds at the point of the bayonet. Then he turned his uniformed ruffians loose to pillage and burn the city which he was pledged to protect, and stepped aboard a Japanese gunboat with his loot. Those who know recent history can readily understand why anti-Japanese feeling revived in Hunan.

Two Americans were murdered by Chang's looting soldiers, and valuable mission property was destroyed. For once, the American Legation summoned courage to hold a corrupt mandarin individually responsible, and demanded that Chang be apprehended and tried as a

common criminal. Yet, after two years' pleasant stay in Japan, when he visited Peking in the company of his powerful *tung-hsing* (man of the same name), Chang Tso-lin of Manchuria, the American Minister granted honorable reception to this protector of the man who had murdered his nationals!

Before the capital recovered from the news of Fat Chang's plight, Wu was half-way up the eight-hundred miles of railway between Hankow and Peking, and still "strategically retreating." Foreign military attachés said that his progress, considering the facilities at his disposal, was remarkable. The students found Wu was in sympathy with their principles, and they determined to make him their military champion. Hundreds flocked to enroll under his standard. In the course of the "retreat" he organized and partially drilled a student regiment.

While these developments were taking place, I had returned to Peking to take up the managership of a local news agency, and kept in close touch with political quarters in the Capital.

The Anfu clique gradually awoke from its stupefaction to realize that it was threatened by a man whom it had considered one of its humblest servants. Presidential mandates ordering Wu to halt were merely met with respectful replies that he was busy with a strategic retreat and, since strategy on the southern front had been placed in his hands, he felt his tactics ought not to be questioned. Little Hsu was the first of the clique to get

into action. He was engaged in a scheme for the reconquest of Mongolia, independent since revolution in both China and Russia had enabled the Mongols to cast off the joint hegemony of these powerful neighbors. The little ex-clerk, picturing himself as the successor to the Great Khans, had moved onto the Asian steppes with a well-equipped but poorly disciplined army. These troops were originally organized for pretended participation in the Great War, and after the armistice rechristened upon Japanese suggestion as the "Frontier Defense Corps" to protect China and Mongolia against Bolshevism.

Leaving a couple of his divisions to garrison Mongolia, Little Hsu hastily brought the remainder of his troops by motor transport over the six hundred miles of steppes to Kalgan, the gateway of Mongolia, where he had a large body of reserves. Then he came down to Peking, and demanded from the President a mandate outlawing Wu Pei-fu and authorizing a punitive expedition against him, although it looked more as if Wu were conducting the punitive expedition against Peking. "Old" Hsu, the President, was not at all assured as to the outcome, and furthermore he had received a warning from Chang Tso-lin in Manchuria not to be misled by his notorious *tung-hsing*. He was therefore reluctant to commit himself to Little Hsu's drastic program. With the permission of Premier Twan, an Anfu commandant at Peking threw a cordon around President Hsu's palace and demanded that he sign.

We foreign newspapermen in the capital hoped for an

unusual outcome, but Old Hsu established no exception to the precedent of chief executives who cowered before bayonets. After twenty-four hours in his uncomfortable situation, he affixed his seal. Had he or President Li, before and after him, defied their threateners, the history of the Republic might be different. But noble tragedy is out of place on the Chinese stage.

Immediately upon the posting of this mandate against Wu, Twan proclaimed Peking to be in a state of siege and under martial law, with himself as Dictator. The Legation Corps sent to the Cabinet an appeal which was almost a threat, asking that Peking City be protected. In consequence, the Chief of Police and Gendarmerie, who had several thousand men, largely trained under General Munthé, Commandant of the Legation Guards, declared that no troops, government or otherwise, must be brought into the city, and that he would hold the walls against all comers. He had the backing of the guilds and the implied support of the foreign plenipotentiaries, and Twan assented. In order to reinforce the arrangement, the American Legation detailed squads from the little Legation Guard of two hundred marines to do scout duty on each of the gate towers, although no provision in the protocol or treaties grants such a privilege.

Meanwhile Wu kept right on retreating—in the direction of Peking. His army grew larger daily. It was urged that he had surely retreated far enough to satisfy any strategy since the southern army had stopped at the Yangtze River, hundreds of miles to the south. Wu replied

serenely that since his army was forced to subsist upon Chang Chin-yao's depreciated currency, the cheapest place for the men to live would be at home, and their homes were in the metropolitan province.

The only power that could stop Wu from coming within striking distance of the capital was Tsao Kun, Wu's patron and nominal superior officer, encamped squarely across his path at the provincial capital of Paoting. Tsao had, and still retains, an unsurpassed instinct for playing safe and avoiding commitment, and that is the reason why he is today the dean of China's military men and, alone of Yuan's original disciples, still in power. Tsao, for the sake of friendship and perhaps as well of his own comfort, had no desire to measure swords with his formidable protégé. He had a sort of awe for the young commander's fervor and a large respect for his ability. On the other hand, he did not care to take the risk of openly turning against his Anfu associates, for there was a possibility that Wu, outnumbered ten to one, might suffer defeat. As a result one of the strangest pacts in history was entered into by the two men, and Wu undertook one of the most dramatic risks in the annals of gambling.

"Since you have put me in this embarrassing position," said "Daddy" Tsao to his young friend, "I suggest this: I will precipitately withdraw to my residence in the British Concession at Tientsin. You take my army—I lend it to you, add it to your own—go on, do what you want to. If you win it shall be jointly announced by us that you have acted from the beginning under my orders.

I will assume responsibility for the strategy, and the victory. But you cannot ask me to risk my head as well as my army. If you lose I shall give out that you came to my headquarters here, inspired disaffection in my own staff, forced me to flee to the protection of the foreigner, and usurped command of my forces yourself. I shall join in demanding your head. During the campaign I shall carefully refrain from commitment and avoid interview."

Bowing, Wu replied:

"I appreciate that my rash actions have made you difficulties. Man merely thinks he gambles with his life. The outcome is already written in the book of heaven and what he does cannot matter. Therefore I accept your proposition. Shall we drink to the bargain?"

Thus were made up the contending forces in the struggle which became known as the Anfu ("Peace and Joy!") War.

IX

PRESS-AGENTING A CHINESE WAR

EACH day the correspondents of the city made the rounds of legation and government offices, swapping news. There was Major Wearne of Reuters, an Australian who had first come to China as a boy and who had won his military honors in the campaign of General Allenby—one of the Peking Club's veterans at poker and bridge, who bore with assurance and dignity the doyenship of Peking's newspaper corps; Whiffin of the Associated Press, spare and gray-haired, possessed of a friendly and non-committal cynicism,—a man who had seen long service in Mexico City and Moscow, and had battled for the rights of the press with a dictatorial American general in Siberia, but who professed never to have known the supreme disgust until he came to Peking; corpulent Giles of the *Chicago News* and some local papers, once a corporal in the Indian army; Donald of the *Manchester Guardian*, big, genial and silent, who lived like a king alone in his own establishment and smoked stogies incessantly but distinguished himself in the community by total abstinence

from strong drink; Frazer of the *London Times*, a grizzled Scotchman with a long news foresight and a canny judgment of race-horses, honored for having been one of the first newsmen ever to penetrate Tibet; Nathaniel Peffer, of the *New York Tribune*, a whimsical, sensitive, obstinate and altogether lovable soul; and Rodney Gilbert, he who traversed central Asia leading his own camel, on a budget of something like ten dollars gold a month, which he earned selling Pinkham's Pink Pills to the Chinese Moslems, Mongols and Turkis. There were others just as interesting: Japanese, Frenchmen, and Britons. (The Germans had not yet returned.)

I was residing, with servants only, in a compound just opposite the imposing modern offices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on "Great Stone Man Hutung," since renamed "Foreign Office Street." Mr. R. A. Burr, the lessee of this place, had gone to Japan to join his family at the summer resort of Karuizawa just before the outbreak of the war, leaving me to take care of his Sino-American News Agency which had offices on one side of the compound. In addition I was carrying on the correspondence of the Philadelphia Public Ledger Service, recently opened in the Far East, the *Japan Advertiser* of Tokyo, and the *North China Star*. I was destined to be loaded with two further tasks before the end of this hectic season.

The stage was quickly set for a battle scene. There was, however, true to the *motif* of farce, considerable uncertainty as to who was to fight whom. As Wu Pei-fu, now reinforced by Daddy Tsao Kun's divisions, steadily

advanced on Peking from the south, alarming reports came in that Chang Tso-lin of Manchuria was moving with large bodies of his "Red-beards" southward into the metropolitan province. The Anfu government got scant comfort from Chang's statement that he was coming down to "mediate," bringing along a few troops to secure the safety of his old patron, President Hsu.

Premier Twan, toward whom Chang had been friendly and obedient, was inclined to credit the explanation, but Little Hsu assumed that the move was directed at him. Chang had waited long and patiently for revenge upon his would-be assassin. This looked like a favorable moment to attempt it. For precaution's sake, Hsu advanced with his Mongolian veterans southeast toward Tientsin, to checkmate the Mukden chieftain. Twan assumed the war dictatorship of Peking and the honorary command of the "punitive" expedition. His nephew, Twan Chi-kwei, was placed in command of the southwest front against Wu in the direction of Paoting. The younger Twan had 50,000 fresh troops, equipped with new uniforms, leather boots and modern arms. They were rationed from the fat of the land, and operating with the advantage of the defensive, from a base at hand, were backed by all the resources of Peking.

The first engagement of the war, eagerly awaited, took place between a commander of young Twan's, Chu Tung-feng, and Wu. So certain was Twan Chi-kwei of victory over Wu's scantily supplied army that he hardly expected to be needed at the front. Sending on his

lieutenant, Chu, he remained in Peking to participate in an anticipatory celebration of victory. Twan and his fellows neglected to take into account the fact that Wu's army, whatever its needs, possessed a general, and thanks to the inspiration of the students, something to fight for: two notable advantages which the Peking cohorts lacked.

Wu, thanks to his adventures in younger days, knew every foot of the ground by heart. He drew Chu's army to the Liu-li stream, half-way to Paoting, where he caught it in a cross-fire from machine guns hidden in burial crypts, and demoralized it by an eruption under foot of the improvised mines which he makes with American evaporated milk tins.

Chu showed no lack of courage. But he thought himself clever in arranging a truce, that allowed him to take up a position on the south bank. He immediately despatched urgent pleas to Young Twan for reinforcements.

While the war rested, waiting for Twan's arrival on the Liu-li, I unwittingly found myself filling a rôle in the Peking Drama.

Peffer and I had joined forces, to cover the city, and went in a motor car from one office to another and one gate to another, scarcely sleeping at all. Yet I don't believe I ever saw Peffer rushed, even when going the fastest. He seemed to get his news by some sort of telepathy, instead of having to collect it from fifty sources and verify it by as many more, like an ordinary mortal reporter.

One day we went down to the Peking-Hankow Railway

96 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

station to see a train bearing Anfu wounded who had been picked up among the rushes on the banks of the Liu-li. Men with all sorts of terrible wounds. Many, swelled and putrid, lay under the blazing sun on the steel bottoms of coal-cars, the thin layer of straw which formed their only mattress indescribably mingled with filth and clotted blood. Flies crawled over the faces and into the mouths and nostrils of the sufferers.

Those still able to complain received first attention from the attendants of the military hospital sent to receive them; those who were past the stage of expression by word or gesture were let lie as so much flesh awaiting burial. The stoicism of these men was pathetic beyond words. Those who live in Asia are not unaccustomed to sights of physical horror, but we turned away from this scene with a feeling of helpless rage.

“Damn their war!” exclaimed Peffer, “let’s let the thing go without press-agenting today!”

Moved by one impulse, we drove down the great avenue of the South City, Peking’s shopping district, past Lantern Lane and Silver Street and Jewel Alley, Bankers’ Bund and Hatters’ Hutung and Ragman’s Road; past the flimsy amusement pavilions of Peking’s Coney Island and the gaudy gardens of her Tenderloin—whither Chinese Emperors have stolen in disguise to revel,—on to the great compound of the Altar of Heaven, lying just within the south gate of the city.

Here we found Dr. John Dewey, the philosopher, who was at that time lecturing in the National University,

with his wife and daughter. They had been viewing the activities of the alarmed populace from the tower of the Peace-Securing Gate. We ordered our native chauffeur to take them home, and free from the drag of even so much as a waiting servant, entered the vast park of this ancient sanctuary to compose our souls.

Inside all was stillness and peace. Under the evergreen oaks the lush grass waved. The triple roof of the Temple of New Year made a background of bluish-black such as one sees on those rare days when he can look right through the sky into the heart of the Universe. The triple-decked Altar of Heaven might have been a bit of the Holy City come down to earth; the great stone causeway connecting the two, in the halo of the sunlight, was a bridge of whitest cloud.

As we feasted upon the beauty and repose of the place we recalled the purple bodies swelling among the rushes on the banks of the Liu-li, the armed hordes milling about the city in the dust and heat. Here, although only a wall divided, we were continents away from it all.

Toward evening we emerged. Squads of gendarmes patrolling the great avenue with bayonets fixed, strings of carts toiling toward the Legation Quarter with chests of family treasures and precious merchandise, brought us back forcibly to the realities of the day.

On the tracks at Front Gate Station stood a short train headed by a locomotive with steam up, decorated with small British, French, Japanese, and Italian flags, but with a great American flag almost covering the boiler

98 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

—the work of the American marines. A mixed contingent from all the Legation Guards were setting out in an endeavor to open the railroad to Tientsin, which had been blockaded by Hsu's troop trains. They expected that it would take them several days to go the seventy-five miles.

We entrusted some despatches to them and turned into the north city. As we passed the Three Gods Temple, now used as the offices of the American Military Attaché, a rickshaw bearing a foreign dressed Chinese whom I recognized as Chan, editor of the *Peking Leader*, sped by. He saw me.

"Oh—Hall!" he yelled. "Go up and take my paper, will you—emergency—I can't explain now——"

"What—Why—Where are you going?" I got out, as I saw that he was passing beyond shouting distance.

"To Belgium—" was the last I heard as he disappeared under the Water Gate, waving his hand.

After some hesitation I decided to go to the *Leader* office and investigate.

The *Peking Leader* is a sort of illegitimate child, published in English, of the *Peking Gazette*, a bi-lingual (English and Chinese) paper which in turn grew out of the *Official Gazette*, the oldest newspaper in the world, dating from the twelfth century. Under the brilliant editorship of Eugene Chen, a Hongkong Chinese, the *Peking Gazette* had been one of Yuan Shih-kai's most telling opponents. Chen ultimately had to flee for his life, and his plant was confiscated and stored in the Bureau of Printing and Engraving, where it remains to this day.

After Yuan's fall, a little nearsighted Cantonese named Leong of the Autumn Water, who had been the editor of the Chinese section of the *Gazette*, but who had not been faithful to his chief, established the *Leader*. Leong's patrons were the founders of the *Chinputang*, or "Step Ahead" party: most prominent among whom were Liang Chi-chao, the popular literary hero whose pamphlets had proved more effective than Yuan's bullets, and Wang Da-hsueh, a gentle old literatus who was for a brief time Minister of Foreign Affairs under Li Yuan-hung. The Gentle Wang, in particular, had an almost superstitious belief, rather common to Chinese officials of the passing generation, in the efficacy of English-language publications. He arranged for the *Leader* a Foreign Office subsidy which enabled it to carry on almost independently of circulation and advertising, and apparently as well enabled the shrewd Leong of the Autumn Water to rise to a position of affluence.

"Autumn Water" is a fine old classical name bequeathed by a great poet; I always surmised that Leong's teacher dubbed the egotistical, weazened-up little fellow in a whimsical mood of irony. He spent most of his time dealing in blooded song birds and old porcelains and he kept a succession of young editors passing through the *Leader's* editorial office, of whom I was to be the first American.

The *Leader* was located in a large brick-flagged compound on Lump Coal Hutung. I had been there often and knew the office. I found it empty. Across the court I located the head copy-reader, a Hawaiian Chinese named

100 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

Lo, Leong's brother-in-law, with whom he was accustomed to quarrel viciously. The foremen of the plant and several assistants stood around, scared looks on their faces.

"Where is Leong?" I asked.

"Fled to Tientsin. Boss Twan is displeased with us!"

"To Tientsin!"

"Yes, for the public. Confidentially he is residing in a nearby temple, but he's not giving out his address."

"Have you no editor?"

"No. Chan went to his friend in the Foreign Office and got an appointment as Secretary to the Legation in Belgium, and has already left for his post."

"Well," I said, "Twan ought not to be permitted to run the town without some opposition. Come on, let's get out the paper!"

The next morning at four o'clock we appeared on the street with an extra large edition, and to reach beyond our clientele to the Anfu partizans, the coolies were told to present copies to all whom they judged able to read English. In our biggest type (not very big, for we were "British style") across the back page ran the prophecy, "Dictator Twan is Doomed."

Since the student revolution taught them a wholesome fear of public wrath, Chinese politicians had become particularly touchy about unfavorable publicity. At seven o'clock, after four hours in bed, I was awakened and informed that my entire issue had been seized and my delivery coolies jailed by the police. At the police station I was forced to wait an hour while the magistrate com-

pleted his toilet. He was friendly, but hardly his own master.

"You are exceeding your authority," I protested.

"But," he replied, "the city is under martial law. This is an order from Twan."

"If Twan has any complaint against my paper, he must take it to my consul. This paper is under foreign editorship."

"Since when?"

"Since last night. Furthermore, there is nothing for you in backing a loser."

"But I'm not free to gamble on the result. Of course, it might take me a little time to investigate your claim," he said slyly.

"The present management of the *Leader* has no funds with which to prolong investigation," I said, "but you know Twan can't possibly last over five days. When Wu's forces take over the city, the *Leader* will endeavor to inform them of your meritorious conduct. Undoubtedly they will be interested in your welfare. Should you find yourself under suspicion, come to my compound at once and I will hide you."

"Well," he said, rather doubtfully, "I must enforce the police regulations. There is one to the effect that it is illegal to give away publications on the streets. At least, you must stop that."

"I'll arrange that," I said.

He smiled. "I shall be indebted to you" (implying, "when you have carried out your bargain"). And he led

me to the room where my boys sat on their stacks of papers.

With resources consisting of a news agency supplying the sixty-odd vernacular papers of the capital, the leading English-language paper, and several outside correspondenceships, I opened a publicity drive on the governing clique which kept pace with Wu's military drive against its armies. I changed the *Leader* over to "American style," clearing the front page of ads so that I might have it to display stories of Anfu crime and inefficiency.

Mr. Du, the editor of a prominent vernacular paper, was encouraged to emulate this freedom of speech. The *Yi Shih Pao*, which he calls in English "Social Welfare," began as an organ of the French fathers who used it to fight French officialdom which was trying to get control of Chinese territory contiguous to the French settlement in Tientsin containing valuable clerical holdings. Du soon broke with his priestly patrons and sought American protection. The paper was registered as an American company, with my host, Mr. Burr, holding half the stock (which in turn, was mortgaged back to Du for more than its value). In Burr's absence, Du sought me.

"If you will take up residence in the *Yi Shih Pao*, to prevent its being closed, I will join you in your campaign against the Anfus," he said.

So I was appointed editor-in-chief of the *Yi Shih Pao* and my job consisted of sleeping in the big, brick-tiled reception hall in the rear of the building, which was hung

with queer Chinese versions of the Virgin Mother and Child and the Sacred Heart.

It was an hour's trip by motor-car from my part of the city, through tortuous lanes, in some places so narrow that the fenders would strike the shop steps on either side. These hutungs were filled from curb to curb with carriages, rickshaws, polo-carriers and pedestrians, all crowding and cursing one another, and occasionally jamming traffic with a fight, inspired by some particularly vile epithet. Any movement was possible only through the omnipresence and efficiency of the police who handled a situation worse in many ways than that of lower Manhattan. The New York policeman usually does not worry about the "face" of those whom he regulates. Considering my other duties, I often occupied my quarters by proxy, but when I did go in person, I was in no condition, after that trip, to sleep. The Goggle-eyed Du and I sat out under the flowering trees, and drank tea until the early hours of the morning.

Du began to publish what he pleased, and his circulation grew by thousands daily. Soon he was hiring rival plants to get out his own paper. His prosperity became so assured that eventually he dispensed with American protection, dropped Christianity, and bought himself a beautiful and very expensive concubine.

The *Leader* and Social Welfare were soon relieved of danger from official interference by overwhelming military developments on the two fronts. In a few days Du's paper and mine were riding on the crest of victory.

X

A CAPITAL BESIEGED BY ITS OWN ARMY

TWAN CHI-KWEI had arrived on the Liu-li to show his distressed lieutenant, Chu, how to win the war. He brought a scheme for annihilating Wu's army with one grand burst of his new artillery. In the night he sent his army and guns over the railroad bridge, which was still under Wu's oblique fire, and lined them up behind the railroad grade. His range-finders, among whom were Japanese, laboriously trained on the spot where Wu's lines were at sundown.

A change had taken place, however, unknown to Twan. By a combined retreat and flanking movement executed suddenly just at dark, Wu had partially enticed, partially driven Chu, who was in advance of Twan, into the position occupied by himself.

Wu then sent runners dressed in the uniforms of captured Chu men to Twan's camp. Following instructions they informed Twan of the change, and also allowed it to be discovered that they were Wu men in disguise, falsely representing themselves as messengers from Chu.

A Capital Besieged by its Own Army 105

When Chu's real messengers later arrived with the same information, Twan of course refused to believe them, and placed them under guard along with the false couriers.

At daybreak Twan opened up with shrapnel, unwittingly laying his own soldiers of Chu's division under a blanket of fire. Driven to retaliation, they charged the battery with machine guns. At the same time Wu attacked on Twan's flank. Twan's men, caught between two fires, broke ranks and fled in disorder. The Generalissimo jumped into a train, and ordered the engineer to make all possible speed back to Peking. The train was blocked by his troops, fleeing across the bridge on foot. Young Twan flew into a frenzy. He compelled the engineer to throw on full steam and plow through the mass of humanity. Leaving the trestle covered with the mangled bodies of his own soldiers, the cowardly head of the "punitive expedition" found safety within the walls of Peking.

Chu was thoroughly disgusted. He sent a Chinese Roman Catholic priest of a nearby village to ask terms. Wu replied, granting honorable surrender on condition that all arms, equipment, uniforms and footwear possessed by Chu's division be first piled up on the platform of a wayside station. The terms were accepted.

Next day, Wu's staff train pulled into the designated station. Major Philoon, official observer for the U. S. War Department, and Robert W. Clack, Y. M. C. A. Secretary at Paoting who accompanied Philoon as inter-

preter, were among the Little General's guests. The sight which met their eyes has seldom been duplicated. A long platform piled high with machine guns, rifles, field guns, side arms, ammunition, shoes, uniforms, neat made-in-Japan trench tools, huge paper lanterns bearing the numbers of the various regiments and companies, paper umbrellas, and a thousand other articles of war. In the distance, against the yellow wall of a little village, stood Chu's division—or rather what remained of it after heavy casualties and many desertions—in its underwear and bare feet, while its swarthy commander, his sword carried by an aide, presented himself at the train-side.

"Howdy," said Wu, acknowledging with a matter-of-fact grin Chu's offer of his sword. Then, "Keep your knife. Get aboard there and take my coupé. You probably need a little sleep. My aides will give you tea, and if you want some 'fire-bakers'" (the common designation of the North-China wheat-cake) "they'll get you some. We haven't more delicate food."

Wu turned to his body-guard of two hundred men who had deployed from the train. "Fall to, boys," he said, waving his hand at the litter on the platform.

They went at the shoes, uniforms and new rifles like hungry children at a pantryful of bread and jam. Old trousers were tossed in the air as officers and men drew on new ones. Sometimes a seat or a knee would be missing, and the dressers would paw about in *deshabille* until they found a whole pair.

A Capital Besieged by its Own Army 107

"When these fellows have helped themselves," said Wu to his Chief of Staff, "bring up the army and turn them loose on the remainder."

He then went over and harangued the de-uniformed troops of Chu. "I could use most of you," he shouted in his high-pitched voice, "as transport coolies. However, those of you who have homes or friends in this vicinity may break ranks, provided you get away quickly and never let me see you again."

Almost the entire body broke ranks. A few officers and men came forward and begged to be incorporated in Wu's army as regular troops.

Meanwhile, "Little" Hsu, on the "southeastern front," was making a better showing than his fellow-commander. He stopped the armies of Chang Tso-lin just north of Tientsin, where the railroad coming down from Mukden half-circles again toward Peking. Tientsin and Chang's cohorts were both on the point of falling into Hsu's grasp, when he learned of the complete route of the Anfu forces to the west. This was too much for the morale of his officers, and although he showed a good deal of personal bravery in attempting to keep things together, his army broke and ran. He left it in disgust, getting back into the capital before the gates were closed.

Hsu's defeat put the end to Chinese control in Mongolia. The native princes there, hearing of their oppressor's reverse south of the wall, enlisted the blessing of the living Buddha, and the aid of the White Russian adventurer, Baron Ungern-Sternberg. Thus fortified they fell

108 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

furiously upon the unprepared and dispirited divisions left behind by Hsu. The Chinese were slaughtered by thousands. A few miserable survivors dragged themselves into Kalgan. The Mongols immediately came under the dictatorship of the mad Ungern, who planned to create a great Buddhist empire in Central Asia. He, in turn, fell before the Reds, who established a "Mongol Soviet Republic," which is upheld by the presence of fifteen thousand Bolshevik troops.

At the Anfu débacle, Peking went into a state of siege,³ not against an enemy force, but against its own disorganized troops. A flood of armed, uncontrolled humanity swept back from the battlefields, surging about the mighty walls, looting the suburbs, and seeking ingress into the city. Deserted by its officers, unprovisioned, and reckless of consequences, the army of the government lusted to get into its own rich capital to pillage, rape and burn.

The Anfu commanders were glad to be protected from their own men. The police forces of the city bravely garrisoned the ramparts and held the barricaded gates—even the railroad gates. Peking was cut off completely from the outside world with the exception of two telephone wires which the vandals without the walls overlooked.

It was easy, at that time, to appreciate why Peking still keeps its wall, and why a lot worth five thousand dollars just inside is worth only five hundred on the outer side of the hundred-and-forty-foot-thick rampart. As long as our besiegers possessed no artillery (they had



THE RAMPARTS AND MOAT OF PEKING

A Capital Besieged by its Own Army 109

abandoned all heavy guns in their flight) and our defenders remained steadfast, the city was safe enough.

The existence of the telephone wires allowed newspaper men to keep occupied. Ice and fresh vegetables and grain could not, however, come in on telephone wires. To add to the discomfort, the heat of the dog days was upon us. The half million inhabitants, unable to get out of the protecting, yet imprisoning, walls, scorched by day and stifled by night.

The frantic Anfus were seeking refuge. Hotels in the legation quarter were filled with them, their wives and possessions. Rooms soared to one hundred and fifty dollars per night. Hospitals were crowded with patients suddenly in need of medical treatment. Banks converted their entire quarters into safe-deposit vaults. There were rumors that foreign ministers were making fortunes by turning their Legations into hostelrys for fat officials and their harems. Many foreign shop-keepers suspended ordinary business entirely, piling their places full of lacquered pigskin chests of gold, silver, art-works, silks and linens, at a daily storage charge of several dollars per chest.

The Anfus, of course, feared retribution as well as rabble looting. Many innocent associates and hangers-on of the members of the notorious club stood in danger of suffering with them. One of these, a tall gentleman named Ma, who had worked himself up from a carpenter's coolie to one of China's foremost architects and who had Yuan Shih-kai's Mausoleum, the Peking Commercial

110 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

Museum, and several buildings in the great Central Park to his credit, happened to be connected with the Ministry of the Interior as advising architect.

Ma came to me in regard to two modern-style houses which he was erecting on South Small Street, known to foreigners as "Piccadilly." The larger one was for his spouse who had borne him seven sons and to whom he was devoted, and the smaller one for his second wife, whom his first wife had recently prevailed upon him to take, much against his inclination. She stated, so he told me, that she had done her duty by him and it was now another woman's turn to serve him as well as her turn to have the assistance of a *femme de maison*. She wanted her husband to have the face, also, which comes from the addition of a second wife, which is a mark of prosperity in China ranking with the purchase of a second motor-car in some American families.

As housing is a very difficult problem in China and I was planning to bring my family to Peking in the fall I jumped at the opportunity to take over and complete Ma's buildings at a very reasonable lease price, and the protective American flag soon fluttered over them. Landlord Ma, with whom I spent many pleasant hours at the feast-table, came to a tragic end several years after this.

He loved his hard-earned money excessively. His oldest son, who had been in France as interpreter with the coolie corps, brought home a French war widow with a little French child. Ma was exceedingly kind to her, and

A Capital Besieged by its Own Army 111

bought off the son's Chinese betrothed—always a costly procedure—in order that he might live happily with his French wife. The foreign daughter-in-law, however, played fast and loose with the old man's credit. At New Year's accounting time, Ma was overwhelmed with bills for thousands of dollars worth of silks, satins, furs and jewels, run up by the girl with merchants in the south city. The same evening his large lumber yard burned. The two pieces of bad news coming together were too much for the old man. He was found the next morning in his apartment with three bullets in his abdomen and a pistol in his hand. . . .

As the situation about Peking grew more tense, there was great fear on the part of the populace that the police might betray the city to the armed horde outside for the purpose of sharing in the loot. To their honor be it said that repeated inducements made to them from outside the wall received scant consideration.

Many Chinese who could find no room in the Legation Quarter went about seeking living and storage accommodations in isolated foreign residences and business hong's. I finally yielded to the petitions of my Chinese writers and assistants, and allowed them to bring one wife and three chests each into the big compound opposite the Foreign Office. An unlimited concession would have flooded the compound with the possessions, women, and children of every Peking member of all their various clans.

XI

ONE WAR ENDED AND ANOTHER ARRANGED

As the triumphant Wu neared the city it became harder to get news. Our telephone lines connected to Tientsin, but Tientsin was as ignorant of what was going on outside our walls as we.

With a friend named Clark who was assisting me on the *Leader*, I decided to go out and see while others were guessing. We joined a Y. M. C. A. motor train carrying medical supplies to the South barracks, fourteen miles from the city, whither many of the Anfu wounded had drifted.

The guards at the "Peace Securing Gate" let us through at a favorable moment. We passed bands of armed men roving about the deserted and partially destroyed southern suburbs. Occasionally a soldier would stop to ask our attention to some festering wound, or to demand bitterly if the people of the city intended to leave the leaderless troops outside the walls in the face of the oncoming enemy.

Nan Yuan, or Southern Gardens, was once a hunting

park of the Emperor but it had been converted into a flying field and military base. Here we found a reserve brigade of Anfu troops which still retained their formation. They were doing the best they could for their wounded fellows from the front. Dr. Wilder, the veteran missionary who headed the train, left his supplies there and with his party turned back. Clark and I went on, bearing authorization to investigate the medical situation in whatever army we should meet, although we had scant assurance of getting back into the city without the party.

Our car wound through fields of maize and millet, from which protruded the ruins of pleasure pavilions, hunting towers and good luck pagodas. The deep-rutted cart road, cut for ages by cruel steel rims, had seldom known the soft pressure of rubber tires. At any moment we expected to run through a sentry line.

There was a loud report. Instinctively we slid down into the floor of the car, while our Chinese chauffeur steered off the road into the shelter of a ruined wall. Merely a blow-out!

We patched things up and went on. At the southern edge of the old hunting park the road ended before a renovated imperial château which had been appropriated for a country seat by Marshal Twan. We expected to find it deserted. To our surprise, about twenty men ran out, apparently delighted to discover that we were foreigners. They were the domestics of the place, whom Twan had left behind.

The chief cook seated us and served us tea, which was

114 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

very welcome to our parched throats. He and the gate-keeper seemed to have no compunction over showing us about the place, even into the most private rooms. In the big central hall which divided the compound into two courts, on a great *kang* covered with Korean tiger skins, was Twan's gaming table, of fragrant sandalwood with ivory top, standing on legs about eight inches high. Behind the hall was a large flagged court about an arch-bridged lotus pond.

Along one side were the women's apartments and at the rear was the bedroom of the Marshal. It was fitted out in Spartan simplicity, with sleeping boards, a heavy mosquito curtain and a rough table, bearing some patent medicine bottles and other articles. We picked up an opium pipe and lamp and slipped them in our pockets as souvenirs. Having spent much precious time we made to go.

"But you will not leave us?" implored the "Big Servitor," as the cook is called by the Chinese. "Stay here and we will feed you—with the master's ducks!" About two hundred of them—beautiful specimens of the species which provides Peking's most famous dish—were clustered in one corner of the pool. "You may eat them all, and I myself will cook them," he exclaimed with a dramatic gesture.

"And why this urgent desire for our company?" I asked.

"Ah," they said, "the Marshal's enemies are just over that rise, and will soon be upon us. If you abide here, we can run up your American flag over the gate!"

One War Ended and Another Arranged 115

But we never stopped to reply to the suggestion. The dictator's ducks were ignored. "Just over the ridge!" we repeated as we made for the motor-car.

There was no road, but we struck west in the direction indicated, over the open moor. It was soaked by the torrential rains of the North China summer. Avoiding water holes and swamps, stopping often to patch our troublesome tire, we arrived about sundown on the outskirts of Changsindien, or "Long New Mart," a railway town at the junction of the cross line from the Tientsin-Peking railway to the Paoting-Peking road.

The ditch-like streets were filled with soldiers wearing blue arm bands. They were grimy and disheveled. They crowded about the automobile in fascinated curiosity, but did not challenge us.

"What army are you?" I asked.

"Chihli troops."

"Is your General Wu Pei-fu here?"

"In that inn there."

We left the chauffeur in the car and made up the street to the inn. Boyish-looking soldiers lay on the ground of the inn yard, kits for pillows, resting. The little commander, who was standing in the doorway of the guest-hall taking the report of a scout, received us immediately and democratically.

The peculiar manner in which General Wu's high, sloping head sat upon his small neck, his light eyebrows and moustache, his sharp, high voice, snapping deep brown eyes, and his direct—almost brusque—manner

116 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

impressed us as a distinct variation from the Chinese type. His upper front teeth, which had originally protruded outward leaving gaping spaces between them, had been joined together with much gold bridge-work, and when he spoke, his lip drew up over them with a sinister, cat-like effect. The expression of his face was earnest—almost cruel, except when he broke into one of his rare smiles, which produced a transformation. There is, as I was to learn from later association, no purposeful cruelty about Wu Pei-fu. In the prosecution of a campaign he is first of all a soldier, but in his personal relations he is one of the gentlest of men.

“Who are you, gentlemen, and what do you seek?” he asked.

“American newspapermen, from Peking,” I said, giving him our cards. “We wanted to find out what is to become of us in the capital, and we decided that no one could know so much about that as you, so we came out to ask you.”

He smiled. “For my part,” he said, “nothing will happen to the city. I am heartily in sympathy with the policy of the police—which, I believe, represents the desires of your Legations—to keep all soldiers out of the city. I shall disarm and send to their homes as fast as possible the disorganized Anfu troops which threaten it, but neither myself nor one of my soldiers will enter its walls.”

“But you have overthrown the Anfu government,” I said. “Someone must reorganize things.”

"That is the task of the President, not a soldier like me."

"The President put a price on your head," I ventured.

Wu laughed. "It will not be difficult for him to change that mandate, substituting the names of the Anfu leaders for mine. I have no hard feelings against Old Hsu, but certainly I shall insist that the traitors be brought to justice. However," he continued, "there may be factors in the readjustment who are not so disinterested as I. I am just informed that a third army has encamped below the town yonder. I have my suspicions, but would like to know definitely what they intend to do. If you would like to visit them I will lend you horses—you cannot get through in your car. I would appreciate your courtesy in letting me know what you discover."

We jumped at the opportunity. Scraggly ponies were given us and we set out. They had on cramped wooden saddles with all-too-short stirrups and the usual untrustworthy belly girths. The approaching night made it necessary for us to run the ponies, although the gait was most painful. We were stopped at the edge of the village by an outpost of big gruff fellows in gray uniforms with red arm bands. After some palaver they led us to the headquarters of their commander, in a long, low farmhouse at the rear of the village.

The brigade commander was a stout, uncouth person, who made a great show of receiving us heartily. Who was he? A colonel of Chang Tso-lin's Manchurian army, who could show these puny "inside-the-pass" men how to fight. (Outside-the-pass and inside-the-pass—at the

118 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

Great Wall—have connotations equivalent to “on the frontier” and “in civilization” with us.)

What was his intention? Orders were to march on Peking tonight, wiping up the last Anfu contingent at Nan Yuan on the way. But what of Wu Pei-fu whose van was already before Nan Yuan and who desired to keep troops out of Peking? He had no instructions about Wu. Orders were orders. If I desired to know more I would have to consult the Big Chief who was at Tientsin, or his field general and cousin-by-marriage, Chang Dzo-hsiang, who, by the way, was expected at the Changsin-dien railroad station with a train of reinforcements brought from Manchuria over the little cross-line connecting this town with Fengtai on the Peking-Mukden railway.

All right, we *would* ask Chang Dzo-hsiang. Galloping back at imminent peril of being pitched into the mud of the road, we turned our ponies over to our chauffeur, jumped into our car and drove like mad for the station. Chang Dzo-hsiang's train had switched off several third-class and freight cars full of troops, and was just starting back toward Fengtai with some sleepers and a parlor car which we guessed to be the quarters of the field staff. We were determined not to lose the culminating interview of the day with the Fengtien (Mukden) general. I drove across the track and stalled our engine squarely in front of the slowly moving locomotive. The train braked to a standstill. Guards swarmed down and surrounded us menacingly.

One War Ended and Another Arranged 119

Clark and I ducked through them and made for the general's coach. We got half-way into the parlor car before the guards stopped us. By that time Chang Dzo-hsiang himself saw us, and his curiosity aroused, came forward. He was a handsome fellow, big-statured, dressed for comfort in trousers and tunic of the peculiar "burnt gauze."

"Your cards," he asked.

We handed them over.

"What! Newspapermen! You stop my train just to ask news!" His big face glowered down at us.

"I beg your pardon, *Da Ren*,"¹ I said, "for the manner in which we have approached you. But we are risking our faces and perhaps our safety, for something infinitely more important than mere curiosity. We, foreigners and Chinese alike, have been imprisoned in the walls of the capital for two weeks in the greatest anxiety and with insufficient supplies, while you outside here have been having your little fun. Any army getting into the capital at this time, your glorious Fengtien troops not excepted, would be likely to break loose and loot. Our police have kept the disorganized Anfu army out and there is little further danger from that source. General Wu Pei-fu has pledged that not one Chihli soldier shall enter the walls, and that he will not advance in body further than his present camp. But your commander behind the village there has just informed me that his orders are to march directly upon Peking. If you plan to fill Peking with your

¹ *Da Ren*—"great man," the flattering designation of every official and officer.

rough fellows, or perhaps start another war by marching over Wu's head, we and the people of Peking would like to know it and the Diplomatic Corps would be greatly interested—and perhaps concerned."

He glared at us. If we had been Chinese—or Russians, whom the Manchurian troops had become accustomed to maltreat—we would undoubtedly have been sent to the wall. After pondering angrily a moment, Chang replied:

"We are to prepare the way for General Chang Tso-lin, who, with Tuchun Tsao Kun, will enter Peking and assist the President to reestablish the government. As to Wu, here, we know nothing about his intentions. If he stays where he is, there need be no trouble, and it will not be necessary for many of our soldiers to enter the city. You may tell your minister this."

He turned to his aides. "Start the train!"

"One more thing, by your graciousness," I said. "We have been authorized by the bodies making Red Cross supplies in the city to ask if you require anything of the sort."

"Thanks," he said drily. "Our army is well supplied."

We bowed ourselves out and got off the already moving train. Our car, which had been pushed off the track none too gently by the guards, had rolled down into a ditch. With the assistance of some nearby donkey men we got it out and drove back to General Wu's headquarters.

He was expecting us, and served tea and crackers, which were very welcome, for we were starved. "Well, what do you make of it?" he asked.

One War Ended and Another Arranged 121

"Seems to me that Chang Tso-lin is all set to appropriate the fruits of your victory," I said, "unless you are ready to fight another war."

"Not now. But you can see how things are turning, can't you? The Anfus are not the only schemers."

"Will you go to Peking?" I asked.

"No. I have outfitted my troops at Anfu expense. If I am granted enough money to pay them, I will withdraw and drill them against a further exigency."

We started back through the dark across the old hunting ground. Lan, our chauffeur, an ex-rickshaw man, could drive at a hair-raising pace through the crowded streets of a Chinese city, cursing appropriately the while to right and left, and leaving amazingly few casualties behind him. Piloting a car by night over a roadless terrain filled with water-bogs was, however, outside of his experience. I took the wheel and put him on the running-board as lookout. Painfully and with many narrow escapes, we made our way back, past Yuan's country seat, now deserted, to the edge of the military preserve. Here an Anfu sentry challenged us.

"What did you see?" he asked, when we explained our presence.

We gave away enough military information to rival camps that night to warrant our being placed before several firing squads.

"The Chihli army," I said, "was in Changsindien, and the Fengtien army was just beyond."

"What! the Fengtien Redbeards?"

"The same."

"What did they say?"

"That they are going to march through here on Peking tonight. They are probably on their way now."

The sentry paid no further attention to us. He picked up a field telephone and began ringing excitedly. We drove on, progress made easier by the dirt tracks. At one point we nearly ran over some bodies lying prostrate in the middle of the road.

"Scouts discovered and shot?" queried Clark.

"Everything in China bears closer examination," I answered. We got out and looked at the bodies. They were beggars asleep with their mouths open!

In a few minutes we drew up before the barracks. A scene of frenzied action met our eyes. Soldiers were hitching up scores of carts and loading them with everything portable in the encampment. The furniture of the officers: old rickety chairs, tables, benches, sleeping boards, wardrobes and chests, went on the same carts in a hopeless jumble with rifles, machine guns, ammunition and bundles of spare uniforms. Wounded men were loaded on top of all.

The highway to Peking was filled with carts and soldiers, moving in the glare of paper lanterns and bulrush torches, and the night air resounded with the curses of mule-drivers and tramp of marching feet. Perforce, we throttled down to their pace and moved along in the strange procession to the city walls, leaving the last Anfu position dark and deserted.

One War Ended and Another Arranged 123

At the south city gate the police agreed to let the fugitive brigade in by small detachments on condition that they pass directly through the south city and out the west gate.

Slipping in with one of the detachments we drove furiously through the deserted streets to the *Leader* office. At half past two in the morning, while Clark was putting the gist of our observation onto the front page, I got Tientsin on the telephone, and dictated a despatch to the outside world.

"This war is ended," began the despatch, "and the next one is already arranged for." It required two years to come to a head.

A few days later, Chang Tso-lin and Tsao Kun entered the capital under an immense triumphal arch, erected in front of the station, and were received in honor by the President.

Wu's well disciplined force had disarmed the defeated troops and relieved the capital, which was ready to do him honor. But after all he was only a division commander turned popular hero over night. He had neither the wealth nor the numbers to face the Manchurian war lord. So he withdrew with his loyal Third Division to the barracks built by Yuan Shih-kai as the beginning of a new royal seat in the loess hills of western Honan. There he bided his time.

The Anfu chiefs, with the exception of Marshal Twan, were in safe refuge in the Japanese Legation. Ultimately they "escaped"—little Hsu first and the others following

—despite the guards placed at the legation quarter gates by Chang. One Anfuite—who unwisely picked the Russian instead of the Japanese Legation—was captured. The servants kidnapped him, threw him over the wall in a sack, and sold him to his pursuers. Popular sentiment came to the rescue of Twan. He was allowed to remain under guard in his own home.

Shortly after Chang's entry the Manchurian chieftain gave an elaborate reception to the newspapermen.

"What about Wu Pei-fu?" asked one.

"Oh," said the little ex-bandit, with a flaunt of his manicured hand, "we will make him Sub-High Inspector General. He is just a subordinate military officer and will take orders."

Chang was to rue that insult.

XII

UNDER THE SHADOW OF FAMINE

MISSIONARIES in the provinces of the North China plain began to send out warnings of a serious shortage in food supplies. For the third successive year rain had come too late to save the wheat and millet, the staple crops of the two hundred and fifty million of China who have no rice.

Food is normally so abundant in China that the two previous crop failures had attracted little attention, but the third failure exhausted the surplus usually carried by the peasants, placing them in the necessity of either eating up their seed grain and facing starvation another year, or planting their fields, and in many cases starving before the next crop could mature. Grain prices began to soar in spite of the regulative efforts of the grain dealers' guilds and chambers of commerce—which maintain a conscientious check upon the profiteer. The poor in the cities faced great hardship.

By late September of 1919 plans were under way for meeting the situation as far as was humanly possible.

Dr. Tenney, missionary, sinologist, educator, diplomat and "Grand Old Man" of the American community, had been chargé during a considerable interim at the Legation after the departure of Mr. Reinsch to stand for Senator in his home state of Wisconsin. The relief measures he had begun to initiate were now taken up by the newly appointed American Minister, Dr. Charles R. Crane.

Dr. Crane, while confessedly not a diplomat of the professional type, nevertheless won the hearts of the Chinese people and did more than some of his astute predecessors to promote Sino-American friendship. His strong representations to his government and people were seconded by Mr. Frederick Stevens, representative of the American Group of the Second International Banking Consortium to finance China. As a result, the American Red Cross instituted a large labor-relief under the direction of Earl Baker, American engineer in the Chinese Ministry of Communications, which supplied grain in return for work in highways constructing. Mr. Thomas Lamont, fellow-director with Mr. Stevens in J. P. Morgan & Co., and leading spirit in the Consortium, together with other philanthropic spirits in America, organized the American Relief Committee, and China was repaid many-fold for her previous liberal contribution to the American United War Charities Fund.

Native and foreign relief organizations sprang up like mushrooms in China, many of a dubious character. Their work was supervised and coördinated through larger Relief Bodies, greatest of which was the United

International Famine Relief Association of Peking, of which Mr. Dwight Edwards, American Secretary of the Peking Y. M. C. A., was directing secretary.

The Peking government took a hand in famine relief by imposing a surcharge on government railway fares and tariffs. This fund went to the construction of a motor road by "famine labor" from Weihsien to Chefoo in the province of Shantung.

It was proposed that a further official contribution to famine relief be obtained in the form of a loan from the banks of the old, or first, International Consortium to be repaid by a customs surcharge. The foreign banks and legations held out for foreign supervision in the use of the money. But Foreign Minister Yen determined that this was a good occasion to establish a precedent of complete loan independence and hung back for weeks while millions approached starvation. One of his secretaries remarked that it was better that millions should starve than that four hundred millions should see their government humiliated.

The publication of this helped consummate the loan. Dr. Yen, however, was greatly angered at this forcing of his hand, and through a secretary published a statement that "Upton Close, whom" he did "not know and who had never interviewed him," had no right to set forth and criticize the Foreign Minister's alleged policies. He was considerably surprised to discover that the author was the editor of the Peking *Leader*, which received financial support from his own office! This subsidy was

promptly cut off, which did not conduce to pleasant relations between the Managing Director, Leong of the Autumn Water, and myself.

Food for the stricken areas had to come from Manchuria. The heavy task of distribution was assumed by volunteers, composed of missionaries, native pastors, students, and engineers and clerks lent by commercial houses.

Chang Tso-lin controlled the supply and shipment of Manchurian millet. He decently kept the price down but profited in other ways. He circulated large additional quantities of paper currency and accumulated in his banks the silver bullion payments of the relief agencies. The Japanese South Manchuria Railway made a contribution of a half-million dollars Mexican and entrusted it to Chang for the relief work. No relief organization ever saw the money.

Mr. Ray Marshall, a veteran newspaperman from Minneapolis, arrived in Peking in time to be impressed into unpaid service as publicity man for the United International Relief Association. He was sent to Mukden to endeavor to get them that half million. Marshall was entertained by one of Chang Tso-lin's favorite tutors, who pledged that the money would be turned over. Apparently the old fellow exceeded the Chief's orders, for no sooner had Marshall returned to Peking than word followed that the former favorite had died "from an overdose of opium" and that the agreements he had negotiated were therefore void. Japan never protested

the embezzlement. Famine finance certainly had a great deal to do with the thirty millions in silver bullion that Chang possessed when he attempted the conquest of the provinces a year and a half later.

Already in Peking Chang was paramount over the less clever Daddy Tsao Kun and the weaker President Hsu. But he had his eye on the suffering provinces, particularly Shantung. In connection with the transport of famine grain, Chang met a Cantonese named Liang Shih-yi, notorious throughout China, who for the sake of reinstating himself in popular favor was at this moment posing as a famine philanthropist.

Liang had been Yuan Shih-kai's secretary and financial manager during his attempt to seize the throne. Later, exiled from his native Canton with a price on his head, he revived his fortunes by organizing a company to recruit coolies for French service during the War. But the coolies were left to the providence of the French for their return passage, and their families in destitution, when the funds of the company disappeared through speculation in Russian rubles—a net which at this time snared most northern Chinese capitalists.

This created a situation in strong and unhappy contrast to that obtaining in the honorably conducted British service. Liang's genius for making sudden fortunes through ventures in high finance earned him the nickname of "The God of Wealth." Now the formation of a famine relief society all his own was rightfully regarded as an announcement of his return to the political

stage. Chang Tso-lin saw in "The God of Wealth" a likely henchman to assist in establishing economic and political influence over the afflicted provinces. Liang stood well with Japanese imperialists, and their friendship was needed to accomplish anything in Shantung. Out of that fortuitous relationship sprang the immediate provocation for the next war. Wu Pei-fu quietly intimated that he was watching.

The sufferings of the stricken people and the sordid intrigue of adventurers were lightened by farcical incidents which did not escape the editor's desk. Chang occupied for some time the splendid palace of the father of the "boy emperor," well suited to the fastidious little ex-bandit. However he demanded that it be fitted with electric lights. The Chinese light company had overloaded its circuits until sometimes a 110 volt bulb was required to give enough light to read by on a nominally 220 volt connection. The service had become a joke throughout China, and so the company explained to the visitor from over the Wall that all applications for new installation were being deferred until additions to the plant should be completed. "King" Chang invited the president of the company to banquet with him. After the meal, the guest was escorted to comfortable quarters in the palace and informed that he would be detained there until the day when the Fengtien dignitary might turn on electric lights. The wiring was completed in what was record time for Chinese linemen.

In the winter following the Anfu war, attention was

focused for some time on Hungchun, a wild, timbered border district of Manchuria on the Korean and Russian frontiers. Korean settlers in Chinese territory there were providing funds and bases of operations for the opponents of Japanese rule in their native country, and also, according to the Japanese, relaying Bolshevik arms and propaganda into Korea. A brigand raid had occurred in the course of which the Japanese Consulate was burned. Considerable evidence was adduced by the Chinese to show that the Japanese authorities had arranged with the brigands for this raid, but this did not check Japanese occupation of the territory with a large army which had been held in readiness across the boundary, and the ruthless annihilation of the troublesome Korean communities.

During the operations which caused high feeling between China and Japan, one of the Military Attachés of the American Legation, Major Philoon, made a secret tour of investigation along the Chinese Eastern Railway, then also occupied by Japanese under pretext of preventing Red Russia from going on into the Hungchun country. With other newspapermen, I went daily to Colonel Drysdale, Major Philoon's superior, to get confidential reports of his progress.

It happened that for several days nothing was heard and the Military Attaché's office was becoming worried as to the Major's welfare. One morning I dropped in first, as my custom was, at "Japan." In the course of a discussion with Secretary Tokugawa I asked him if he

could tell me anything in regard to the physical geography of the Hungchun region. He kindly sent to the Japanese Military Attaché's office for a map, which he hung upon a wall and explained to me. I noticed a thin, red dotted line, divided off at intervals by little circles containing dates. Along the line was a legend in mixed Japanese *kana* and Chinese characters. I caught the characters "Rice agent route." The Chinese call America *May Gwo* or "Beautiful country," but the Japanese, I had learned in Shantung, designate it by the Chinese characters *Me Gwo*, "Rice Country."

I thanked Tokugawa for his trouble. Later I was talking to Colonel Drysdale at the American Military Attaché's office.

"Still no word from Philoon," he said anxiously.

"Colonel," I asked, "would you like to know where Major Philoon has been each night up to last night?"

"Why, yes," he answered in his astonished drawl.

"Get me a map of Hungchun quick," I said.

On his map I drew out and numbered the circles as I had seen them on the Japanese map. "That," I said, "is accurate information received here by wireless. If you are ever in doubt as to the whereabouts of your agents, ask the Japanese."

There arose a saying among newspapermen in Peking when information about the American activities was desired: "Ask the Japanese."

One day the correspondents were invited to the Yin Tai and sat with freezing feet on the damp brick floor

for three hours while the wall-eyed Chin Yun-peng, who had been elevated from the meaningless post of War Minister to the Premiership, told us in his stuttering voice that he and the President, Old Hsu, had decided to settle China's troubles by calling for the election of a new parliament. The upshot was that in the provinces which heeded Chin's election summons three sets of parliamentary representatives existed simultaneously. There was the original parliament prorogued by Li Yuan-hung, now following Sun Yat-sen around in his varying fortunes from Canton to Szechuan, the Anfu Parliament whose members were drawing salaries as "Economic Advisors," and Chin's new aggregation which failed to get on the salary list at all.

Throughout the drama the Foreign Office carried on under the very able diplomat Yen Wei-ching, known abroad where he held the post of Minister to Denmark, as W. W. Yen. Ephemeral military dictators and presidents recognize the value of the Foreign Office as a prestige-maker among the nations and have generally spared it their tampering; it has been the one Chinese government department actually and continuously to function. The highly educated and keen-witted young men in the Chinese diplomatic and consular service have proved their ability by maintaining for all these years the belief of the world powers in the existence of a government in China.

We can sympathize with their effort to maintain their country's prestige. Yet in unconsciously misleading

the world to believe that the "Republic" represented an established order they did their people great harm, and lost them much foreign sympathy. At the time when the world looked for the consummation of stable popular government in China, the exposure of the mockery confronted it. Failure to accomplish the marvels which the world was led by these young diplomats to expect, is the thing held against China.

At this time the "New Consortium" came upon the scene. For many months regarded as a mystery, it finally came into the open with a note of self-introduction to the Minister of Finance. The western-wise old Chow Tzu-chi had been placed in charge of the treasury at the bidding of the "duumvirs," Tsao Kun and Chang Tso-lin. Chow was educated in America. As consul in San Francisco and legal head of the wealthy Chinese community there he had amassed a fortune. For Chinese consuls can be at once the most poorly paid and the best paid of public servants, depending upon their personal ability.

Chow was a big, fine-looking Shantungese, suave and affable, able to hold his own in any story-telling match in an American club-house. However, he did not show his affable side to the International Consortium when he returned a reply to their bombastic note of self-introduction. Various factors make this unusual combination of diplomacy and finance an absolute failure as finance, however it may rank as diplomacy. Among these were the ineptitude of the Consortium to grasp the possibilities

of coöperation with the Chinese bankers' guilds and the consequent hostility of these bodies; the high-and-mighty manner of its representatives toward Chinese officials and people; their attempt to deal with Orientals over a desk after the brusque fashion of American business; their insistence upon negotiation with titles that are empty rather than with personalities that counted; and on the other side suspicions due to the too-obvious interest of foreign plenipotentiaries in the furtherance of the scheme. Since the Student Revolution there has been a popular feeling that foreign loans, particularly when made to irresponsible and ephemeral régimes, were a first step in economic enslavement, and that it was better to let material development go its slow pace under native capitalization.

Apparently the Consortium kept Japanese money out, and—although this could not have been intended—inspired the campaign for “Chinese control of money in China,” both healthy developments for the Chinese people. The Consortium's blunt tactics threw the Ministry of Finance directly into the hands of the Chinese Bankers' Union, a powerful and growing organization which knows no dividing lines of north and south.

The Chinese bankers, offended at the cool way in which the Consortium passed them by, demanded that Minister Chow have nothing to do with the foreigners, and at the same time advanced him a group-loan to meet his immediate exigency—the renewal of rolling-stock on the Peking-Hankow Railway. Thus the Chinese Bankers' Union became a native bankers' consortium and as such

has brought the national treasury completely under its hegemony. To date this remains the most remarkable phenomenon in the trend of organized business and industry to take over China's national affairs—the true trend toward political stability in China just as it was in our own Federalist days.

For American capitalists, the lesson of the failure of the Consortium is this: When American money is willing to dispense with the guardianship of our own State Department and the ephemeral Chinese régimes with which that department must deal, and meet half-way the ancient and stable Chinese guilds and merchant organizations upon a basis of straight business enterprise, nothing will stand between it and the greatest investment opportunities the world has ever known. But the tradition of the concessionaire remains. Capital is unwilling to forego the advantages of official protection and favor. Seeking extra safety, it has got itself into extra perils. Seeking usury, it has failed to collect interest.

I believe there are many Chinese guilds and Chambers of Commerce, themselves wealthy and ably administered, which would prove safe partners in manufacturing enterprises and even in the establishment of public utilities. Foreign capitalists may as well give up hoping for guarantees of "foreign control and operation" upon investments. Peking's endorsement may yet be had, but it is worth nothing until the guilds and merchant communities take Peking. This is coming—it would be greatly hastened by intelligent coöperation from our financiers.

The problem of financing China probably will be settled when the Chinese business man, knowing what he wants money for, and how much he wants, goes out to get it in the open market. When that day arrives, China will be as independent of the foreign financier as she now is of the foreign trader, and her economic vassalage will be ended. Just now American money requires extraordinary profit or guaranty before it will leave home. As six per cent dividends become less frequent in the home country, American capital will be less fastidious in other lands. But by that time it may have to work through, and divide with, European interests.

My position on the Peking *Leader* was becoming more and more difficult. Editing a newspaper in Peking combines all the disadvantages of exciting uncertainty and monotonous routine. However, I would not, as the Chinese phrase it, "play little dog" to the directors, and they were uncomfortable. I was kept constantly on guard. Where my own instinct and judgment were weak, I fell back upon the resources of my Man Friday, Mr. Yu, and several other keen political sleuths. They could find out what the president said in his sleep! But these nightmares often needed considerable editing.

A diverting interlude was my trip as attaché to the American congressional party who were guests of the Oriental governments in 1919. My invitation came from the Japanese—who know how to heap coals of fire—and my principal duty was to assist the versatile Dr. Arnold, our Commercial Attaché in China, to provide for

the comfort and amusement of wives, mothers, aunts and flapper daughters who accompanied the congressmen in such number as to forever confirm Orientals in their suspicion that women rule America. On beautiful West Lake at Soochow, a portly member from Missouri, endeavoring to straddle the space between two sampans, plunged into the lotus pads and stuck his head fast in the mud below, and our special train waited six hours while he was being "disinfected" inside. In the Japanese Chamber of Commerce at Mukden a House orator made a Fourth of July speech topped off with "Your Flag and My Flag" which turned the few Americans present homesick, but left their Japanese hosts nonplussed. In Seoul a member from California was apprehended along with several thousand Koreans whom he was addressing on Self-determination. Everywhere the American girls flabbergasted their decorous hosts.

Upon my return I found Leong of the Autumn Water emerged at last from his hiding place (he believed in playing safe) and making matters difficult for Clark, whom I had left in charge.

The management wanted to dismiss me with a handsome present for having tided them through the crisis and bet on the winning side. But I saw lots of fun still ahead, so I refused their offer. The Chinese sense of moral etiquette forbade their taking direct measures to get rid of one who had saved them.

Chinese are clever at developing situations in which a man cannot retain his "face" and his office at the same

time. I was trapped in a field quite outside of the political. Towards press time a telephone caller announced the wedding that afternoon of a prominent couple in the younger Chinese social set. Half an hour later a good story in beautiful longhand (Chinese always write English beautifully), describing the gowns and feast in detail and giving a list of prominent guests, arrived by courier. I put the story at the top of the social column. The next day friends of the "bride" were swift to inform me that no such ceremony had occurred or would occur. I had to retract the wedding! Having come to the place where the "fun" of running a Chinese partizan newspaper was overbalanced by the annoyances, I resigned the post, and placed my time at the disposal of the Famine Relief Committee. I was led on into many adventures and was employed, unknowingly, to help precipitate the next war-scene about the capital.

XIII

WITH A WOMAN WRITER IN THE FAMINE REGION

SHORTLY after the New Year, while Chang of Mukden and the "God of Wealth," by manipulation of famine finance, were getting possession of the government Bank of Communications with a view to starving out Wu Pei-fu, Mrs. Eleanor Franklin Egan arrived in China under joint arrangement between the American relief committee and the *Saturday Evening Post* to "write up" the famine. At the suggestion of Dr. Crane and Mr. Frederick W. Stevens, I undertook to be her guide, and mapped out a detailed itinerary for a week's journey through the area in worst distress.

Before starting I had opportunity to take Mrs. Egan to the weekly official interview given newspapermen at the Yin Tai. She was the first woman, I believe, to participate. The surprised government secretaries measured up well to her unexpected appearance, but I had to use my persuasive powers to the full to get her by the guards at the "Heaven Peace" Gate.

The beauties of the Yin Tai, or Shadow Pavilion, were

in strange contrast to the squalor of the famine region. The waters of the "South Sea," an artificial lake three-quarters of a mile in diameter dug by the old Ming emperors, lapped the foot of the "Heaven Peace" Gate and stretched away to a rocky promontory which could be made an island by the raising of a drawbridge. This was covered with fairy-like pavilions whose blue and black and gold and green tiled roofs, lifted above the changing colors of the lake amid the foliage of immense trees, were like many-colored precious stones in a setting of jade.

The Yin Tai buildings and grounds stand in the first rank among the works of beauty made by man—I doubt if there is anything else in the world quite as artistically perfect. Yet our "highest paid editorial writer in the world" states with airy abandon that "China is a country with nothing worth seeing!" I suspected that a number of my fellow-correspondents attended the weekly interviews with the same motives as my own—not with the expectation of getting much material worth publishing, but for the privilege of viewing the restful glory of these ancient grounds.

We set out through the "black zone" of famine from Tehchow on the Tientsin-Nanking railway across eastern Shantung and western Chihli to the Hankow railway at Hantan. Before the railways were built on either side of it, this district, traversed by the Grand Canal, had been the seat of considerable splendor. But large areas of its once populous cities were covered with ponds or debris, and the great walls were crumbling.

Here a body of brigands, "independent revolutionists," ruled almost undisturbed by the authorities about them. They had a "Minister of Education"—a Chinese college woman who escaped when the rest of her class at Peking were arrested for intrigue by Yuan Shih-kai. After his death she tried to run a self-supporting school in southern Chihli but the harassments of petty officials made her glad to move it into the area ruled by the bandits who, on their part, were proud to adopt her.

We were accompanied by the indomitable and cheery Dr. Wilder, who had commanded the Red Cross train to the south barracks in the Anfu war—now en route to take charge of the Hantan grain station. A Chinese woman who acted as combined *amah* and chaperone for Mrs. Egan, and two men from the American Legation Guard, a sergeant of marines of Polish extraction and a young private of decided American traits, completed the party. We engaged carts sheltered by mats after the fashion of the prairie schooner, and set forth. The north China plain, so beautiful with lush verdure in the growing season, was brown and bare as a desert. When the sun shone, we were warm enough to be uncomfortable; when it disappeared and the wind blew, sleet and sand were driven through our woven rush shelters and mountains of bedding could not keep us from shivering.

The first day out, word came through the hospitable Presbyterian Mission Station at Tehchow that some congressmen of the United States corn belt were advocating the sending of surplus corn to the Chinese famine

region in the idle Shipping Board vessels—a scheme for killing several birds with one stone. But even had maize been suitable food for starved stomachs, and could it have arrived in time, the dumping of foreign foods would only have disrupted the transport of the native grain, the supply of which exceeded means of distribution.

Famine workers were harassed with many fanciful schemes, some sentimental, others commercial. Donations of tinned milk from firms aiming to create a Chinese market could be used for the starving children,—but supplies of cigarettes and chewing gum sent with like object to people perishing for lack of food were jokes at a funeral. We hastened to the nearest “telegraph-town” and sent out cables of protest against the American corn scheme, Mrs. Egan adding some spicy ironic touches for the benefit of certain friends in New York.

The second day out we came upon the full horror of the famine. At first the plump faces of the sufferers deceived us. We soon learned, though, that below these “baby” faces, unnaturally puffed out, the bodies were mere skeletons. There was no spirit of “eat while the food lasts and then die” such as would be found among a people of different temperament. Instead there was a grim, self-imposed rationing. From many famines of the past, precedents had come down as to the first and second and third substitutes to be used for grain in order of necessity, and this ancient wisdom was quoted and followed diligently.

These wonderful people do everything by custom—even to dying of starvation!

Trees were shorn of their bark, the stubble was pulled out of the ground. Yet so ingrained were the habits of husbandry that with their last strength peasants would plant rather than eat their seed wheat, and then wander forth, knowing that unless unforeseen help arrived they would never live to harvest the crop. Homes were denuded of their crude furniture, and what was more serious, of farming implements. In the larger towns where there was a demand for wood, brick and mud houses were torn down, section by section, and the timbers sold for food. Market places were piled with smoke-blackened timbers, the roof trees of ruined homes. We questioned a peasant and his son, who were pushing in a wheelbarrow load.

"This is the last of our house," said the man, "we won't need it any more. We will eat this and die."

Living on under a few tiles supported by one remaining beam, we found a mother and three little children who had torn down the long house bit by bit, gradually retreating into what remained, until they reached the last roof timber. They were planning to sell that and sleep on the freezing ground until the end came. The woman was nearly blind from malnutrition, yet she would not ask for money. When finally convinced that we were offering her silver, she received it with a dignity that pained us. At other times we were surrounded by a begging, clamoring mob.

We thought that nothing could startle us after these sights, and yet we found ourselves much exercised over the information that in a nearby village it was even worse—"the people were eating their girls!"

Everything needs verification in China; even the idiom of the language has part in the general conspiracy to mislead the stranger. "To eat one's girls" we found, upon arriving at the place, means to eat by selling them for a term of years to the "man-trader." He turns them over at a profit as maid-servants or tea-house entertainers.¹ Yet this was bad enough.

"Why didn't you bring your relief a half hour sooner!" cried one woman. "The *fan-ren-dy* took my daughter away only a few minutes ago. She was getting so weak!—we dared not keep her another day without food." And she wiped her eyes with the corner of her padded jacket. In most cases, we were convinced, children were sold to save their own lives even more than the lives of their parents.

In the prison at a town named Weihsien, seventy criminals had starved to death along with their guards. The bodies were thrown off the city wall and devoured by the dogs. Two courageous missionary women at this place—the Misses Moberg and Brann—were practically keeping the population alive through a steady inflow of small contributions which came to them in reward of

¹ It may be thought barbarous that such a traffic should be legally recognized. Yet let it be remembered that China forbade "traffic in inferior peoples" in 1739, while our own enlightened country continued this form of slavery for more than another century.

146 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

their faith. On the long steps of the Confucian temple, which had been turned over to their work, we saw six hundred children taking millet gruel. Their combined sipping, like the loud swish of water, made a strange and haunting sound. On the temple above was an ancient Confucian inscription, most appropriate for the use to which representatives of another faith were putting the sage's sanctuary:

"The True Culture is Sympathy."

These earnest women had turned their own modest home into a hospital for starving infants, and they were up day and night trying to save the spark of life in children whose voices were too weak to be heard and who weighed no more than rag dolls. Here was more than scientific relief—here were human sympathy and Christ directly expressed. We bowed in reverence before their works and faith. Yet, because of some ecclesiastical row, the director of their mission was trying to turn these women out of the mission premises!

The well-cooked meals and comfortable beds which, in spite of their ceaseless tasks, they insisted upon preparing for us, were luxury after the filthy dirt-floor hovels in which we had been compelled to put up on the other stops of our journey. Regular inns had long since gone out of business in this no longer travelled part of the country, and the utmost of accommodations obtainable was usually a stable or the blackened kitchen of some street restaurant. Of course we carried our own food, usually served out of tin cans on newspaper platters.

A Woman Writer in the Famine Region 147

The water was strongly alkaline and we missed the usual joy of hot tea.

Westward from Weihsien snow fell, and the road became more and more dangerous. A two-wheeled Chinese cart will travel at the most alarming angles without tipping over, but Mrs. Egan was irritated rather than comforted by my assurances that she was safe in spite of the plunging of first one wheel and then the other into the depths of chuck holes. To assure her, I sat on the shafts of her cart, throwing myself from side to side to counterbalance the tipping, while she wasted box after box of matches trying to light Fatimas in the driving wind. The nerves of all of us were set on edge by our own misery and the deeper tragedy which surrounded us. It was depressing to the strongest to see hundreds of thousands of people quietly awaiting death. If they had begun to march *en masse* on Tientsin and Peking, looting the towers of the rich as they went, it would have relieved our spirits. But the Chinese are too civilized for that.

In some few instances, the bolder spirits allied themselves with the brigands and robbed the wealthier citizens, sharing the proceeds with the helpless starving. In one village a gentleman showed us the long, furrowed scar reaching from ankle to knee made by the point of a candle flame which bandits had held to his leg to compel the surrender of his cache of silver. The man would have burned by inches rather than give up his treasure, but his wife could endure the sight no longer and told where

it was hidden. The few large landholders of the country guarded their grain in picturesque round towers which reared themselves above the starving plain.

One noon we drove into a village for the *da gien*, or "big rest" of noonday—a feature of all overland travel in China. Immediately we were surrounded by rough, black-garbed fellows. Mrs. Egan had no faith in the merciful qualities of Chinese brigands and was very much alarmed. I immediately jumped down from my cart and accosted the biggest ruffian.

"Any redbeards (brigands) around here?" I asked.

He scowled and began to draw his gun. "We were told that there might be robbers here," I pursued. "How can that be with all you fine armed huskies to protect the people! I believe it was mere idle talk."

He looked at me quizzically and then laughed, replacing his gun. "Sure we are protectors of the people," he said. "You are safe. Come in and have some dinner."

We ate with the brigands, and they took us around the village to the homes of the most destitute, where we left small contributions. When we set off, they escorted us out of town, promising that we should suffer no molestation, although we carried a considerable quantity of silver. Just the same Mrs. Egan was glad to be rid of their company.

The next night, in the midst of a sleet storm, we drove into the railway station at Hantan, where Dr. Wilder saw the rest of us aboard a train for Peking. Mrs. Egan discovered that the young American private was endeavor-

ing to scalp his berth ticket, which the accommodating conductor did not require of him, and in her forceful way reduced him to submission to the ways of virtue. The remainder of the journey home was quiet.

Mrs. Egan and I both arrived with high temperatures. I went to bed immediately, but she sat in her room in the Peking Hotel and fought away doctors and nurses, while she typed out some of the longest and most expensive news cables ever despatched in order to make the deadline of her paper. A week's delay in the American contributions to be aroused by her stories would have meant the passing of a more tragic deadline for many weakened bodies.

But I had left my Peking editorship in search of a more peaceable calling. Guiding a woman writer was, I found, to have jumped from the frying pan into the fire. My next jump was toward—an earthquake!

XIV

“WESTWARD HO!”

SCARCELY was I out of bed when there came the opportunity to join an expedition for investigation of famine distress reported by officials and missionaries in the far-west province of Shensi. The Reverend John D. Hayes, Rhodes Scholar of Oxford and son of a pioneer Presbyterian missionary, headed the party as a member of the International Relief Association.

Through courtesy of Minister Crane, the Legation Military Attaché Colonel Drysdale, and Language Officer Major Horsfall, escorted us. Passes from the Ministry of Interior accorded us the privileges of Prefect Mandarins in respect to official coöperation and hospitality; the Ministry of War gave arms permits, and that of Communications an authorization of free use of the telegraphs.

Since Hayes would report at length to his Committee, and I was to correspond for the *China Press*, Philadelphia Public Ledger Service, *Japan Advertiser* and Sino-American News Agency, the operators at remote stations of north-west China, used only to their several thousand code

numerals for Chinese ideographs, were threatened with the necessity of brushing up their Roman alphabet transmission—also a requirement for appointment on government lines.

Beyond the immediate prospect of duty in a famine region was another—that we might get even farther west than Shensi and visit the region of Kansu recently devastated by an unusual earthquake, mysterious reports in regard to which had been filtering to the coast. There were rumors of typhus in Honan and a Chinese tailor made us “air tight” suits of raw silk to wear next the skin. This material is repulsive to insects. But in Honan we saw no typhus cases nor even a louse. Hayes eventually used his typhus suit for pyjamas. I saved mine, unworn, a souvenir that haply may be useful against the “cooties” of the next European war.

Chengchow, the junction where we left the Peking-Hankow line, was a typical Chinese “boom town” of grotesquely ornamented brick-and-plaster fronts and squalid mud-and-straw rears. It swarmed with professional beggars who flock to the new city in China like realtors to southern California. After a hilarious night at the joint Standard Oil-B.A.T. Mess, we went westward on the Belgian railway, Denham, young district head of the Standard Oil, accompanying us.

At ancient Loyang, near the railhead, we stopped off to visit General Wu Pei-fu. He was unwilling to receive us conventionally, lest he be regarded as approving of our mission. This was our first intimation that there might

be "something rotten" in Shensi. A subordinate officer entertained us at the station and took us out to see the troops at drill. On the parade grounds we "ran into" the little general.

He seemed particularly proud of his special corps of gymnasts and high jumpers. "Take quite a wall to keep them out," he remarked, as they performed for us. Had Ringling's agents spotted them, I'm afraid the general would have lost some of his pet soldiers.

He had had considerable difficulty with his student brigade, he said in response to our inquiry. Each recruit had expected a captaincy in two weeks and a generalship in six. Obviously, in one unit, they could not all become officers. So he had disbanded the brigade and scattered its members through other divisions where they had opportunity for promotion and acted as a leaven among the common soldiers. He had established an "army university," where classes of privates and officers were placed under a special Tutors' Corps, recruited from the most gifted students and commanded by Chief of Staff Li, a quiet man of scholarly attainments.

Wu wanted the Famine Relief Committee to supply funds for a scheme of labor relief which he had in mind. If we would buy the cement, he would have his soldiers supervise construction of a bridge across the Lo River, from his barracks to the Buddhist-sculptured Lung Men Grottoes. This would have made this ancient relic more accessible, and incidentally it would have increased his radius of military control. As always where local or

personal politics might be alleged as a motive in relief plans, the committee had to decline. But Wu's scheme was so modest, compared to those of other officials and military chiefs, that there was more than ordinary feeling back of the Oriental profusion of regrets. Considering the calamity's benefits to his rival Chang of Mukden, it did seem that Wu was faring badly.

Wu asked the American sentiment toward Chang Tso-lin and himself. We replied that informed Americans felt that military chiefs of all kinds should be done away with, to which he whimsically agreed. "I heard in Peking," I chanced to remark, "that Chang has made a compact with the Tuchun of Shensi to your rear here."

Wu's eyes flashed and the sinister curl came over his lips. "If that is true," he said, repeating, after his mannerism, the important words of the sentence several times, "this world becomes too small for both me and Tuchun Chen Shu-fan of Shensi. I will not endure such a threat."

I wondered if I had innocently "started something," but I was not greatly concerned over Chen as yet. He was to mean more to me later.

Upon our departure, Wu informed us that some days previously he had sent horses and an escort of cavalry onward to await us at the railhead and escort us to Shensi. Denham, who had been over the road before and who reserved a commercial freedom, smiled his wise smile and stated that he had already ordered a *shenza*. If he forewent the quasi-official status that would have

been his on accepting the general's proffered mount, he also missed sharing the expense of the escort and the "bitterness" of riding pony back on that secular trail with which we soon made woeful acquaintance.

At the little town Gwanyintang (Hall of the Goddess of Mercy), where the railroad loses itself in an unfinished cut in a loess hill honeycombed with dwelling caves, we found the cavalry sergeant and his squad lodged at the most expensive inn, as befitted the escort of excellencies like ourselves. We paid the bill for their several days' high eating and drinking and the grooming of the horses.

The worst Main Street I ever saw led through the village to the Great Northwest Highway. Under the wall of the Merciful Lady's temple was a muddy pool deep enough to drown a mule, and we had to crowd our mounts into the open-fronted shops of the protesting merchants on the street-side to get by. An epidemic of thievery had broken out among the refugees leaving the railhead, and at brief intervals one would come racing down the street, pursued by a shop-keeper from whom he had snatched a "fire-baker" or a "slow head," as the small round steamed loaf is called.

I saw one caught, and was minded to intervene out of sympathy, until on penetrating the melee I realized that the whacks they were laying on the culprit's padded coat were a matter of sound rather than torment. It is unusual for starving Chinese to steal, even away from home as these were. I suppose the bread men soon learned to put their tempting wares out of reach of the passer-by.



ONE OF BUDDHA'S GUARDIANS

The gigantic cliff sculptures at Tung-men, across the river from Wu Pei-fu's headquarters. Done by Buddhist Indian Missionaries fifth-twelfth centuries A.D.



KWAN-YIN, GODDESS OF MERCY

Favorite Buddhist divinity in China.
Another of the Cliff sculptures at Coyang.

Our horses were shaggy, short necked, stubby-legged creatures, looking as if they might combine a Chinese inscrutability with all the vicious traits of the Montana cayuse.

I had tried Chinese saddles before, and this time carried a McClellan, kindly lent by the quartermaster of the Legation Guard. The others of the party rode Japanese imitations of British polo saddles captured by Wu from Twan the summer before—or walked. The Chinese escort sat with their knees in their stomachs, depending not upon their loose saddle-girths, but upon balance, to keep atop their animals. They were much given to leading their mounts, except when approaching a town, when they clattered with great *éclat* through the gates and down the busiest street, as often as not more than losing the face they intended to gain by tumbles, which greatly amused the townsfolk.

I did not blame them for leaving their girths loose. Chinese ponies can bite like snapping turtles. Once my mount reached around suddenly and took my foot in his mouth, stirrup and all. Fortunately I had on heavy boots. Many are the vagaries of these brainy little animals. Their social interests in particular were an annoyance. They insisted on following the bell pony single file, and neither force nor cajolery would get them to go abreast or take a different trail. If a bend in the road isolated one for an instant he would madly bolt ahead in entire disregard of his rider, until again in sight of his comrades. I once was riding along a precipitous

trail when my pony noticed that his comrade, bearing Hayes, was abreast on a level four feet above. Without warning he leaped for the higher trail, striking Hayes's horse. For a moment it looked as though horses and riders were to be precipitated together into the mud beneath. Hayes brushed past, and I rolled off and seized my mount's head. Hayes came back to help, and we pulled the pony up by the neck.

Melting snow lay over the high, rugged country to the west, the divide between the loess plateau in Honan and that in Shensi. Ascending the first slope, we passed a man with a carrying pole over his shoulder. Slung in a basket at each end, a child swung comfortably to his long easy stride.

"Going west—this is not the way to market," I said to Hayes, thinking of the many children I had seen being taken off to be sold as maids or singing-girls.

We stopped to question the man, and learned that the mother had succumbed to famine back in their Chihli home. The father had taken his children, a boy and a girl, and started for the great uncrowded west—China's land of opportunity. We took their pictures, left them a little money, and went on.

On the heights an awesome sight met our eyes. Over snow-spotted mountain passes, wind-swept plateaus, through abysmal defiles and past terrifying precipices, an endless procession thronged the road. It was a reminder of the ancient crusades. A few were riding. Most were on foot, toiling along under rolls of bedding, a



CHINA'S "COVERED WAGON" MOVEMENT

Emigrants going out to settle the great, vacant Northwest, left empty by the dying out of the race of the Khans.



TREKKING ON THE MONGOL STEPPES

Photo by Hall.

few kitchen utensils, maybe a fowl or two in a willow cage. Some were shod, but without socks, others had socks but no shoes. Most of them quashed through the slush striking bare feet against the flinty roadbed. The highway was lined with the soaked remains of worn-out cloth sandals.

These were the same refugees whom we had seen swarming over the freight cars which came out of stricken Chihli. Through glaring days and bitter, freezing nights, they had ridden as far west as modern locomotion goes. Then they had taken to their legs. For they dreamt of the cotton and indigo harvests in Shensi, and the wheat harvest, later, in yet farther Kansu; those crops promised food in return for labor.

Cheerfully they made way for our cavalcade of horses, crowding up against the banks and calling out a greeting. We stopped to speak to a huge old woman who hobbled along on bound feet. She was somewhere between eighty and ninety, she said, doing us a curtsy for our attention. All her family had perished. Years ago a son had gone to Shensi. If she could only get there, he was sure to have food enough and to spare for his old mother. How much further was it to Shensi? Did we think the road would be better further on?

Two hundred miles on foot to search for a son who might be anywhere in a province as large and as populous as Pennsylvania! Her wet foot-wrappings and shoes must have been very painful. We offered to give her a lift on one of our ponies over the remainder of the 3,000 foot pass. She shook her head.

158 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

"These old legs are a bit wobbly," she said, "but I'm more used to them. They'll take me through!"

Charging her fellow travellers to look kindly after her, we pushed on. As the setting sun threw a red glow over the snow-spotted hilltops we passed an old fellow lying by the road in a coma of exhaustion. An occasional pilgrim stopped in a brief endeavor to revive him. Others wagged their heads and went on. He was past saving. It was merciful to let him die where he lay. There was no other way.

The inns were crowded with refugees who took advantage of their free sleeping quarters. They could order no expensive food or wine to recompense the landlord, but no matter how meager their funds, they always insisted on tipping him a few copper coins of "water money."

*"Du-dz neng wo-liao
Ku-dz buh neng po-liao"—*

("the stomach may be empty, but the pants mustn't be torn.")

This was the answer when I asked them why they did not keep this money. For the Chinese it is worse to be without self-respect than hungry.



BI YIN SZU

The temple which houses the Chinese Hall of Fame. 500 statues of teakwood covered with gold leaf, among which is one of a Caucasian face--Marco Polo.

XV

CHILDREN OF THE CLAY

THANKS to our fellow-traveller of the mighty Standard Oil, we were able at most stops to put up at that company's agency. It is hard to criticize John D. Rockefeller after his hospitality has saved you from native inns in mid-Asia. At one forlorn city a Belgian priest greeted us with cordiality which could not have been exceeded had we been his archbishop. But we were embarrassed more than cheered when we found that his style of living, after seventeen years of Chinification, was even less comfortable and alluring than that of the inns. I should except, however, his wines and tobacco. These were of his own growing and preparation. I have found that these very human fellows tend vineyard and tobacco patch second only to their spiritual flocks. In many parts of China they have done more than the new agricultural experiment stations, or the British-American Tobacco Company, to better the quality of native wines and stogies.

From the top of a high ridge one evening, we sighted Shanjo. Fields of sprouting grain stretched below us

into distance until, far away, they merged their tender green into the dull platinum of a crenellated wall. Behind, sparkled the curving roofs of the city. Beyond, as we began to descend, the swollen sun dropped from the pale sky into a stream of molten gold—the Yellow River—its horizontal rays touched fantastic peaks and terraces up-stream from the old city.

We were in the loess badlands—the best country to grow crops, the vilest to get them out of. Forging a tributary under the Shanjo walls next morning, we passed a great gate in the mountain and entered “the defiles” of the Great Northwest Highway.

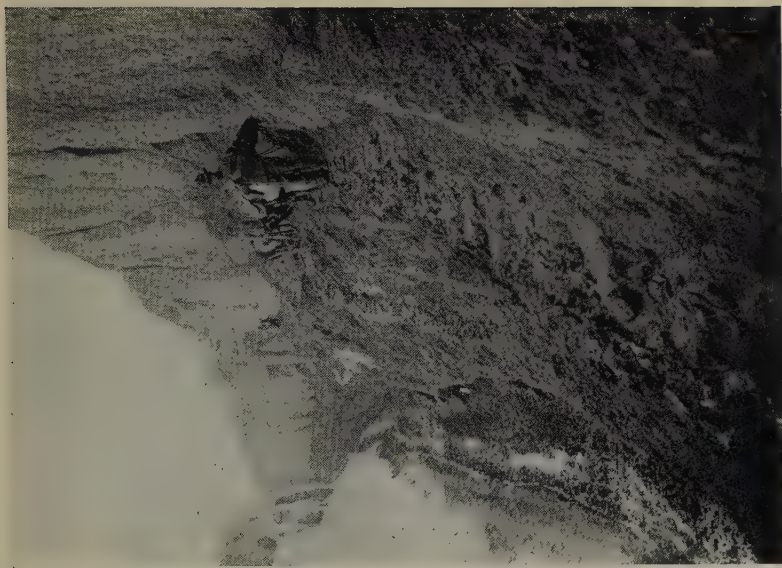
This is a road worn two hundred feet below the surface of the plateau by three thousand years of continuous travel; so deep with mire and water in the wet season that carts are built boat-shaped, allowing them to skim along the top when their wheels fail to strike bottom; so full of fine loess dust in the dry season that animals frequently go over their heads and strangle in the drifts and riders are forced to wear masks over their faces. That road is the worst important highway in the world!

Horse and foot travellers were constantly climbing the banks to escape from the muck of the road. Perilous and precipitous trails were thus cut out. Carts frequently capsized. I rescued one delicate little Chinese lady from an upset *shenza*. Each accident was signal for loud recrimination and argument, ending with a face-saving apportionment of blame among the carters and muleteers concerned.



THE GREAT NORTHWEST HIGHWAY—WORN INTO THE
PLAIN BY 3000 YEARS OF TRAVEL

Major Horsfall, U. S. A., and Wu Pei-fu's Lieutenant.



TRAVEL ON THE NORTHWEST HIGHWAY IN MOIST
WEATHER

Major Horsfall, U. S. A., and Wu Pei-fu's Lieutenant.

Yet the traffic is tremendous. From the dawn of civilization this ancient artery has been the connecting link between west and east; the highway which bore ambassadors, kings' daughters, Nestorian and Buddhist missionaries and Moslem pioneers, with silks and spices, and many a less romantic cargo, between the courts of Rome, Persia, Moscow, and glorious Cathay. Since Marco Polo travelled it, the sea route has taken most of its transcontinental traffic, yet it remains the sole outlet for twenty millions in Shensi and southern Kansu, and the main channel of communication for two million nomads of the mountain and grass lands stretching endlessly to west and north.

We had to stem the stream of wheat-carts bringing thousands of sacks of Kansu's excellent, hard-kernelled product down to the starving millions below the defiles. An accident blocking the road would throw hundreds of vehicles into a jam. Drivers would unhitch and camp patiently beside their beasts for hours, or even days, while the clogged traffic slowly bled itself out. Horses, camels, and *shenzas* could squeeze through at such times. Thus we were able to pass with little delay, but our cart-luggage was usually many hours behind us. Denham's comfortable *shenza* was our salvation, for he would generously exchange its luxury for our hard saddles when we became tired.

Picturesque cargoes were coming down from mid-Asia. A cart caravan passed, piled with deer antlers in the velvet. These had come camel-back two thousand miles

across the Gobi from Uliassatai, the little kingdom of Lapp-like Tatars on the southern edge of Siberia. They were bound another thousand miles by cart and water to Hankow, and destined, when ground, to make pills for dyspeptic Chinese. The Moslem traders in charge said the horns would sell at half a dollar gold per pound, down there in the great mart of the middle Yangtze. Once in pills, they would bring that much per ounce. America is not the only country in which fortunes are made from patent medicines.

The Chinese should not be too severely blamed for the condition of the Northwest Highway, although the only repair work we witnessed in this section was by an old woman who was throwing earth into a chuckhole in front of her cave home and taxing all passers a cash or two. Road maintenance upon the pliable, shifting loess offers problems that modern engineering has not solved. Natural bridges, sudden sinks, gashes, and other fantastic formations constantly break the rolling plateau to trouble the road-maker. The capricious terrain was the cause of a peasant saying:

“Farming is good—if one can find his farm.”

Full realization of this remark came to us only when, farther inland, we came to where an earthquake had “made mountains walk” in a manner fantastic beyond imagination.

It is safer and warmer to live *in* the loess than on top of it. The caves have the additional advantage that as the family expands, there need be no haggling with land-



ACCIDENTS HAPPEN ON THE CROWDED NORTHWEST HIGHWAY



SOME TRAFFIC ON THE GREAT NORTHWEST HIGHWAY

A jam of grain carts it will take several days to break up.

lords or building guilds. With a shovel and barrow a new room or a suite can soon be hollowed out of the great soft cliffs. Further, when a home becomes too populous with other than human inhabitants, one may abandon it to find or dig another. Half to three-quarters of the residences in any cave settlement are temporarily unoccupied by man, until such time as the other dwellers shall be starved out.

Cave towns are excavated in tiers up the hillside, while peasants are often found living under the fields they till. Everything, even the furniture, of the dwellings is moulded or hollowed in the friendly loess. These people are in very truth, "Children of the Clay."

Our first experience in these caves was at the refreshment rooms by the wayside. Even thin, cold bean-soup and *lao-dzar* or "sweet mash"—a white, slightly alcoholic product of cooked rice—were welcome diversions to a day's journey in the defiles. At Dzeeichuan, a city of excavated homes in seven levels, we had to put up in a cave inn. The sleeping-*kangs* were built under the window, just beside the door at the front. We found the cave warm and dry. Our horses were stabled in open-front, excavated stalls.

Occasionally our road came out on top, and we glimpsed the fantastic terraced landscape, green with sprouting winter wheat. In these fields fed flocks of great black geese. Nominally wild, they were actually so tame that they would strut between the very feet of the blue-shirted farmers as they hoed the rows. Yet the sentry

geese, by sight or smell, could spot a white man with firearms while well beyond range, and it required strategy to keep the party in fresh fowl.

Sometimes we could creep up, using scattered grave mounds for cover; once I came across a peasant who was either half-wit or hero—I did not stop to discover which—for he allowed me to hide in the fold of his padded gown and fire across his shoulders; at other times we engaged wheelbarrow coolies to push us along the trails within range of the flocks, and lying flat on the off-side of the high central wheel, we fired through the spokes. In a spirit of fun, Hayes and I entered into competition with the colonel and major—preacher and newspaperman against two marksmen of the U. S. Army. And as luck would have it, we came out with the first and largest bags.

“Oh, well,” said the war-scarred colonel lightly, “soldiers are trained to shoot other things than geese.”

One day, just as I was taking aim, a peasant ran out and scared the flock away. One of our mounted escort, much offended for my sake, began lashing the poor fellow with his whip. Indignant in turn, I pulled the soldier from his horse, and lectured the astonished fellow on the rights of man. Afterward, when calmer, I tried to explain that I understood he had intended to please me. But his morale was gone entirely. He couldn't comprehend such “Excellencies” and was afraid to serve us longer. He stayed sullenly in the rear until the next change of guard.

We trained the brainy Kansu ponies which we received later at Sian to charge full gallop among the surprised geese, stop dead as they lifted for flight and stand rigid while we shot; we then retrieved the wounded from horseback whether on land or water. Thus we could get a brace of birds to our saddle strings without so much as dismounting.

Once we rode up on some birds asleep on a sand bar. I shot the sentry and he flopped into the water. We captured him considerably beyond the horses' depth. He was five feet in spread of wing to wing-tip, and weighed nearly thirty pounds; his hams were as big as a young porker's. So keenly did my horse take to the sport that riderless he once pursued a stunned red goose for miles over a dried course of the Yellow River. The bird was flying low and he finally caught it, dragged it to me in his mouth, and dropped it—when, to his surprise, it took wings and flew off, this time far out of reach. The pony seemed much crestfallen over this anti-climax.

The red duck, which foreigners call "Mandarin Goose," is a large and gorgeous bird of red and white plumage. It is never seen in flocks, but only in pairs. If only one of the pair is brought down, the other will invariably fly in the face of the hunter in a bravely blind endeavor to save its mate. If the survivor be not killed, the Chinese say it will pine itself to death. The birds mate for life, and stand as the emblem of conjugal fidelity in Chinese lore. This touching faithfulness was also shown by a graceful, delicately colored species of wild dove. One

of these birds would circle, apparently grief-stricken, above the crumpled body of its mate. When hunting we always got these birds in pairs.

Getting, along each day's route, more fresh meat than our party could consume, we took to bringing braces of birds as gifts to officials and delegates of commercial and educational bodies that welcomed us at cities. In spite of Buddhist prohibitions wild-fowl would not be so plentiful were not the Chinese equipped only with such antiquated implements as flintlocks, traps, birdlime snares, and clay-ball throwers—a sort of cross-bow shooting a large clay marble.

On the fourth day out of Gwanyintang we passed through the massive Dung-Gwan, or East Gate, which stands upon the boundary between Honan and Shensi provinces. High on the masonry are cut immense Chinese characters: "Number One Pass." This is a site of deeds of blood, of valor, and of romance, and the only citadel that Jenghis Khan could not reduce.

The gate was be-flagged in our honor and an embarrassingly large guard of honor met us. Here Wu Pei-fu's escort turned back, excepting one lieutenant who insisted his orders were to see us safely to the capital of the Shensi governors. After remonstrance at the needlessness of his trouble, we took him along. Little we guessed that we were bringing in a messenger of intrigue, to arrange the ruin of the self-crowned king of the province. The foreigner can do nothing in China without acting as someone's tool. China's First Sage, who said, "The princely

man will not be a tool," leaves the barbarian at a loss how to avoid being "used" by his people.

The axle makers' guild at Dung-Gwan is prosperous and arrogant, for here begin the more spacious western roads, and every cart must be changed in gauge correspondingly. Passing out of this city in the midst of a caravan of hundreds of carts, litters, camels, and foot travellers, we skirted the sheer cliffs overlooking the confluence of the Wei and Yellow rivers, and emerged onto the valley floor of the Wei, in the shadow of the Hwa Mountains.

"Before the Hwa Country was the Hwa District, and before that, the Hwa Mountain," runs a local saying. The people of this region claim that China took its native literary name "Hwa Gwo"—sometimes translated "Flowery Kingdom"—from the sacred mountain which towers awesomely above them. In Chinese cosmogony Hwa Shan is the pivotal center of the earth, most holy of the "Five Sacred Mountains."

For at least two millenniums, this mountain has been the retreat of nobler souls, wearied of the glamour of the court or the strife of the market place. Its altars go back to the time of primitive monotheism, and its temples were hoary before Confucius glorified Tai Shan. The porcelain, bronze, and gold roofed temples perched upon its precipices or hidden among its giant firs are repositories of ages of philosophic and romantic lore. Few emotions that have stirred the heart of man since the dawn of history are untouched in the stories which cluster

about cave and hermitage and dell upon it. One short tale may serve as example.

Two shaded dens in a granite cliff are known as the Caves of the Unknowns. Here dwelt a monk and a nun, from prime of life until old age, helping one another discreetly, but keeping their vows of silence. Not until the man's dying hour, when she tore the disguise from his face and dropped her veil, did people discover that he was an exiled courtier and she was his sister. She had deserted court luxury to seek him long and vainly in barbarian wilds, and finally in grief had given her life to seclusion on the holy mountain. Not till her brother's death did she know that her search had been successful.

Crowning a moon-shaped rock at the very summit of Hwa Shan is the Altar to the Universe, built to the One Great Spirit before men learned to roof their shrines. At the foot of the fantastic three-thousand-foot shaft of rock, three giant characters hewn by Han Wu-ti announce his courage in defeat when driven to this mountain. Later, victorious, he became the Hero-God of War to hundreds of millions. Lao-tzu, the Elder Sage, here thought out the precepts of the Tao Teh Ching before he sallied forth to his own little hill, a few miles up the valley, to teach and invite disciples.

I heard enough legends of this Chinese Mount Zion during my short stay to fill a book. Poet or artist might cover pages with its beauty, but only a few camera glimpses must tell it here.

XVI

A PHILOSOPHIC RIP VAN WINKLE

OUT on the plain stood Hwa-Shadow Temple, its ancient ramparts, peaceful, impressive, rising from ankle-deep grain. The magnificent halls of the enclosed area—some scores of acres—were falling to ruin. The one exception was the triple-roofed gate tower, topped by a miniature gilded pagoda, which was the illustrious empress Tsu-Hsi's return for the temple's hospitality while the western barbarians occupied her sacred city in Peking.

Hwa Yin Miao is one of the few places which the Chinese feel is too sacred for foreign feet, but we were accorded the extraordinary privilege of a personally conducted tour. Our guide, the Opium Suppression Commissioner of the district, warned us to maintain careful decorum as the priests were very jealous of its precincts. Our pious pledge came near being shattered at the very gate, when the Commissioner himself said, "Attaboy! *dzai djere hsia bal*" (dismount here—that's right). An isolated expression in one's own tongue startles one in interior China. The sedate Commissioner

was very proud of his "Attaboy," a fragment of "English" acquired from an American officer with whom he investigated opium growing in another part of the empire.

Under the ancient trees about the buildings stood many sculptured tablets and figures. Some of these, notably the figures of "The Sages," dated back two millenniums. All were mounted alike on sculptured tortoises.

"Why do you use the turtle, most despised of animals, for this?" I asked.

"Oh!" replied the Chinese, greatly shocked, "these are not *bieh* (turtle) but *gwei* (tortoises). The tortoise is the foundation of the universe, most honorable of animals, and the turtle but a despicable counterfeit."

The coincidence that *gwei* also means "honorable" may have helped the status of the tortoise.

Several great marble slabs were freshly overturned and cracked—the first evidence of the recent earthquake to meet our eyes. Priests carefully distinguished for us the cracks made by the Ming earthquake, three hundred years ago, and those of the Sung earthquake, when the dragon wagged his tail three hundred years before that.

In spacious halls under the curving, golden-tiled roofs, we saw immense ancient paintings. There were the "Dragon Swallowing the Sun" and other symbolic conceptions, as well as conventionalized landscapes and figures. Natural features of this Hwa district decreed the forms of much of China's art. I did not suppose that the awful and sheer mountains of Chinese paintings could have any

counterpart in reality until I saw the fantastic lift of Mt. Hwa. Nor did I think that the forests of their painters could find pattern outside a nightmare until I saw the gnarled and twisted persimmon orchards of the Wei Valley.

We were looking at the beautiful bronze furniture used in offering incense and sacrifices. "And would you like to see the man who has slept for five hundred years?" asked our guide. "He is here."

Chen Dan-sung, the Chinese Rip Van Winkle, was not a shiftless villager driven out by a shrewish wife, but was poet laureate of a Sung emperor. He rolled himself in a blanket and went to sleep as a protest against the vanity of all things earthly. Five hundred years later he awoke and inquired politely if the world had improved any. Upon receiving an unconvincing answer, he pulled his blanket about him and rolled over for another five hundred year nap.

Our guide showed us an immense peach tree in the court of Chen's "bedroom."

"When he went to sleep, he had a peach stone in his mouth," he explained. "It rolled out on the ground, and grew into the tree that you see." The peach is symbol of immortal life—and symbolic meaning may lie in the whole story.

The sleeping form lay under a beautiful silk coverlet on a great lacquered-wood couch. A priest stepped forward and drew back the blanket. The figure looked suspiciously like well-cast bronze. I questioned the Commissioner. It did not occur to him to be critical.

172 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

"It must be a real man," he opined. "Maybe mummified."

We were not allowed to touch the slumbering Chen Dan-sung. His next awakening is due somewhere in the twenty-first century. Let us hope he finds the world of that time worth keeping awake for.

One of the great halls was being used for a soldiers' school. We dropped in on a class and heard the full-grown, uniformed pupils reciting in unison an essay on the essential superiority of Chinese culture. A division subject to the Military Governor occupied the rear compound as barracks. Back of that, a gate gave exit to the lively public mart and forum of the little town of "Hwa Shadow."

In the gateway was a huge stone dog-with-sun-in-mouth, the horrid "Pekingese," conventional in Chinese art. The "sun" had been carved so as to roll freely between the lips without coming out. Pushing it from side to side would bring one luck. We each indulged in this precaution, called "Attaboy" to the kind Commissioner, and were off.

"From here the road," said "Happy," our head carter, "is as level as a board."

I was getting saddle-sore and he persuaded me to take one of the carts. Half a mile, and I was jolted to a wreck. At my complaint, "Happy" himself took command of my cart. I had long known there was a science in cart driving, but the way he controlled every movement of the tandem team and eased the wheels down sides of ruts instead of



THE FRONT GATE OF HWA-SHADOW TEMPLE



THE OLDEST RELIC IN CHINA

Said to be the tomb of Huang-ti, generally called founder of Chinese dynasties. This tomb is probably 1000 years older than the sepulcher of Tut-ank-a-mon of Egypt. It undoubtedly contains immense treasure but no one would dare to desecrate it.

giving them a dead drop was a revelation. Soon I was asleep, rocked to slumber as in a hammock.

I awoke at an unusual sound—the exhaust of a Ford motor-car.

“How on earth did they get that thing out here?” I asked.

“Happy” told me that the Civil Governor had brought out several “Lizzies.” They had been hauled through the defiles lashed upon skids. The carters got as far away from the cars as possible, for the nearest teams were always getting requisitioned to tow them.

The road broadened, lined on either side by large trees and irrigation ditches, and the traffic became more varied. Painted ladies, brilliantly garbed, their freshly-done hair stuck with silver ornaments, passed us mounted on donkeys. They rode side-saddle, and were usually attended by a youthful donkey man. As universal as anything in China is the privilege of the women to leave mother-in-law’s roof for a few days each month to visit mother. One can see them almost any day on the roads, freshly bathed, combed, and painted, wearing their best jacket and pantaloons, with a gift in their arms—a bolt of cloth, or a bundle of garlic.

Carts with four solid-wood wheels were a novelty to us, as also a style which rode high on two large wheels and was pulled by a “gee” ass and a “haw” ox. Most interesting were great Kansu and *kou-wai* carts, Asiatic edition of the prairie schooner of our own old west. *Kou-wai*, “Outside the pass,” or “wall,” is equivalent to

"Wild West." It is the land of romance, adventure, and hardihood to the Chinese. An "outside" man despises an insider as our cowboys despise a "tenderfoot."

Ancient temples beside the way were being used as school houses. Pausing, we found that "pencil reckoning," the new-fangled arithmetic of the West, had displaced the ancient abacus, and a subject called "conserving life," or hygiene, was added to the classical curriculum. Pylos—memorial arches to scholars, widows, or beautiful sentiments—lined the road. Many had sunk, or the ground had built up about them during the centuries, until only the topmost cross-beam protruded.

At sun-down we drove into the little city of Lintung. At the first vista of the street I thought I saw every shop protected by a hovering globe of fire. It was but the sun's last rays diffused in the inflated bladders of swine, hung out to cure.

Mr. Chang met us. He was dressed in a silk top hat and morning coat, above baggy satin trousers bound in at the ankle! He had discovered too late, he explained in good "college American," that moths had banqueted upon the seat of his dress trousers. He was a graduate of Nanking Christian University, and was now, he announced, Commissioner of Foreign Affairs in the provincial government. Whether the Civil or the Military Governor was the head of that, he admitted was at times uncertain to himself. But on this occasion, under order of the civil dignitary, he had come twenty miles with

an additional guard of honor to escort us into the capital.

“You shall come with me tonight,” began Mr. Chang, hat in hand, “and I will give you a bath”—we looked at one another appraisingly—“in the private tub of Shensi’s most famous beauty. You will rest and feast in her palace. And then I will escort you over the river into the city, and their Excellencies, the governors, will receive you.”

XVII

THE CHINESE CLEOPATRA

MR. CHANG mounted his cart. Our swollen procession followed it through the city and up a steep hillside to a high enclosure. Led by Chang, we dismounted and entered, climbing a steep flight of steps hewn in native rock.

"Gentlemen," said Chang with a sweep of his silk hat, "you are now in the lodge of our Cleopatra. Consider the place entirely at your disposal."

By the light of the moon we could see that we were standing under a fairylike pavilion which jutted out into a tiny lake. Across the water were "fancy-work" structures, rising tier on tier out of the hill-side. High-arched bridges connected the farther shore with the pavilion where we stood. A warm mist arose from the water.

Chang waved us on. "This is the lady's swimming pool. In a grotto underneath is her bath—both heated by the breath of the eternal dragon himself. Yonder, are her parlors and feasting rooms. Let us proceed."

Our Colonel, always gallant, found his voice. "But—is the lady in?" he asked.

Chang laughed. "You will be deprived of the brightness of her presence. She left here in great haste eleven hundred years ago, and never returned. You may do honor to the fragrance of her beauty at her grave, after you pass Sian."

That evening the hall was gay with provincial and county officials. They were not reticent as to hope that our relief money would soon be coming into Shensi. After the banquet, a dozen of us went down to the grotto and lolled in the hot purple water which flows out of the mountainside.

In earliest history and in legend antedating the historical era, the Lintung hot springs were celebrated for their curative properties, and they are to this day the objective of a constant stream of sufferers. The Pool of Healing was hollowed out of the mountainside by the First Chin, the fierce and haughty Scythian who welded the Chinese pioneers into an empire three centuries before Christ. The scholars and their philosophy got in his way—for Chinese teaching has from the beginning championed the family against the state—so he buried the wise men alive and burned their books as funeral pyres.

For two thousand years the grave of this founder of Chinese national glory has been a dung-heap in the valley below Lintung. Passers-by to this day take pains to befoul it more. In strange contrast is the attitude toward the sacred relics of Tang the Enlightened, who did little to further—or even to conserve—the empire, but did much to advance learning and the arts.

It was this Tang Ming-hwang who transformed the crude bathing place of the tyrant Chin into a fairy château for his lady-love, the fragrance of whose beauty, as Chinese say, yet permeates it, balcony and walk, hall and grotto and still expanse, after a thousand years.

As I sat in the warm waters and let their slow current flow about me, I could imagine her nymph-like form, half hidden by her thick black hair, in the far recess of the dimly lit grotto. Many have written of her, but I feel that I, too, am entitled to tell her story. And perhaps with more reason than they—for have I not bathed in her pool?

Yang Gway-fay (her family name was Yang, and Gway-fay means literally "precious consort") was of another type than those fascinating, cruel schemers who brought about the wreck of both the Hsia and the Chou, the first and the third, dynasties of China. Yet, inadvertently, she nearly caused the ruin of the Tang, the most glorious of dynasties, and only through the sacrifice of her life was the throne saved to the prince of her affections and his house.

The austere old chroniclers were scandalized by the devotion of their great Emperor, the Son of Heaven, Tang the Illustrious, for this girl who was the daughter of one of his minor officials. Between the stern characters of court records we may read that she possessed culture, dignity, and a beautiful devotion in addition to a physical perfection which defied all description and quite turned the Emperor's head.

The seat of the Son of Heaven was at Sian-fu, in the new and ornate palace which is now a mound upon which flocks feed. The grounds and gardens have become, through the change of time, an athletic field for the public school boys of the city. It requires an unusual feat of the mind to imagine, while watching a hilarious game of soccer on the rich lawn, that the Illustrious Emperor, Ming-hwang, once strolled with Beauty among these pools and rockeries and minarets.

In one far corner of the crumbling walls, is proof of Yang Gway-fay's presence, as well as of her playfulness. Fame mentions her long, slender hand; with its delicately tapering fingers. A poetic courtier one evening found an excuse to take this hand in his own, exclaiming:

"Oh that I might preserve the beautiful contour of this hand in stone!"

"And why not?" she asked simply.

Withdrawing her hand from his she placed it against a boulder of the rockery under which they sat. The courtier found a stylus of harder stone and traced the outline of the empress's fingers.

And for eleven hundred years all visitors to the palace—few but illustrious in the days of its glory, more numerous in the days of its ruin—have taken the privilege of placing a hand over the contour of that of the beautiful woman. Centuries of this homage have worn the impress of a human hand deep into the ancient stone. When the other stones of the rockery were removed, by request of an Empress Dowager this stone was preserved, and the

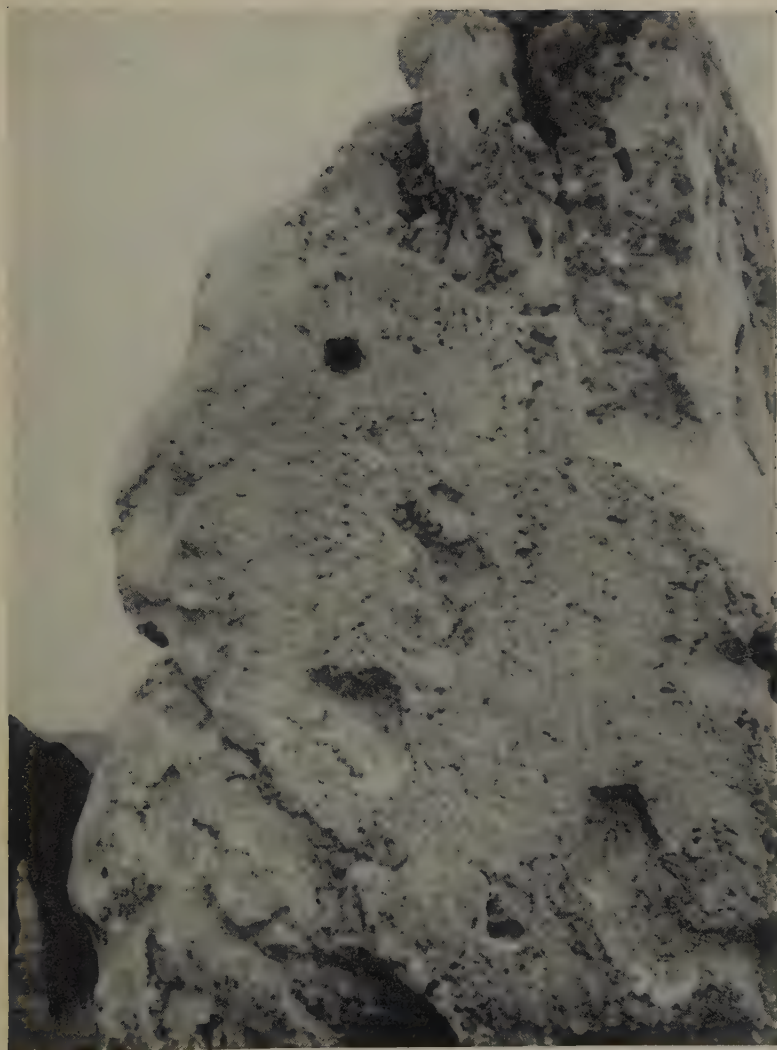
Dowager's Stone, as it has come to be called, bearing its granite evidence of her whose soft hand once pressed it, takes rank with the Lintung hot springs and the lonely grave at Ma Way Bu, as the beauty's memorial.

Within recent years, one of the few foreigners who have visited the land of the Glory that was Cathay has seen fit to chisel out the palm of the hand, and take it home. For a souvenir!

The court at Sian-fu was not, however, the spot in which Gway-fay preferred to be wooed. She liked best to be with her lover at the hot springs, where the warm sulphur water gushes out from the base of the mountain upon which old Lao-tzu taught.

Here in the ancient pool, Ming-hwang bathed with his favorite and her two comely sisters. She so loved this beautiful nook, with its gushing streams and purple tinted pools, that the Emperor built a palace there called the "Flower-bright Gardens." Many picturesque pavilions perched about the semi-circular hillside, casting their fair reflection in the water below. About it all was a high wall, and Tang even fenced the Old Sage's mountain above, so that Gway-fay might bleach her skin in the warm, purple water or loll about under the pavilion in the center of the pool, combing her long hair or playing with her pets, without danger of being spied upon by any but her hand-maidens.

And the Emperor himself was the only man whom those maidens admitted through the portals. However, pictures in the shrine at the top of the mountain represent



THE "DOWAGER'S STONE" WITH THE IMPRINT OF YANG GWAY-FAY'S HAND
Tang Palace grounds, Sian.

the Old Sage signalling to beautiful women on the shore while he floats down the River of Time on a raft, and if they are an index of inclination, it is probable that no wall kept his ghost away from its perch atop the hill when the lovely Gway-fay took her morning bath.

Every idyl must have an end, and the end of this was swift and tragic. The Son of Heaven was missed from his palace for weeks at a time, and lesser luminaries fell victims to the temptation to overshadow the Great Illustrious. The business of governing was subordinated by the Emperor to the more engrossing business of love making; the ministers left to their own devices busied themselves with plots. The people grew restive. An heir to the deposed dynasty took advantage of the situation, and the ministers connived.

One day the Emperor and his beloved were startled by horsemen, faithful retainers of his household, who had ridden furiously the twenty miles east from Sian to warn him that his court had been seized by the rebel. They desired to flee with him over the Szechuan mountains, where he might remain in safety until he could muster his loyal forces. Gway-fay begged her lord to abandon her. He swore that he would not. The horsemen finally set out with both of them by a circuitous route toward the northwest. The Emperor appeared to his faithful servants to be quite oblivious to the seriousness of the situation. He seemed solicitous for nothing but Gway-fay's comfort.

Arrived at Ma Way Bu, fifteen miles west of Sian, these servants delivered to their ruler an ultimatum.

"Your throne is tottering," they said, "but you think not of your throne. We, of your own household, are risking our lives to save you, but you think not of us. You think only of this woman. Now, you must leave her or we must leave you to the mercies of your pursuers."

Tang Ming-hwang was not so chivalrous as we of Western standards might expect. He would not desert her, yet he was unwilling to pay the price of devotion.

So the woman solved the problem. It is said that Gway-fay fitted the noose to her own round throat; the retainers pulled it taut. Tenderly they buried the beautiful limp body, and fled with their king.

Tang Ming-hwang was young. He came back, ruled long and illustriously, and became known as "The Enlightened," and "The Virtuous." During the lovers' festival of his sixtieth year, he visited through the magic of a philosopher's story his queen in the Palace of the Moon (or the Western Isles—what matter which version?). There she gave him as a pledge half a jade hairpin, which was a sustaining token to him through his old age. He composed the Classic of Filial Piety, which in his own renowned handwriting is engraved upon the four sides of the black marble obelisk in the Forest of Tablets.

But in the hearts of the men and women of Han, the lovely Gway-fay has more place than the Illustrious Emperor. The territory about the ancient capital, after twelve hundred years, abounds with her memoirs. He who wanders in the Hwa Ching Yuan—"The Flower-bright Gardens" at Lintung—thinks not of its builder, but

of her whose shade he sees combing her hair in the moonlight at the far end of the Long Pavilion, or bathing in the Grotto of the Purple Water. The pilgrim or traveller who passes Ma Way Bu, does as pilgrims and travellers have done for centuries—he lifts from the mound to his nostrils a bit of the earth, which, legend has it, is perfumed by the exquisite form which has passed into it.

XVIII

TRAGI-COMEDY ON LAO-TZU'S HILL

WE were awakened at Lintung with the information that an officially-conducted tour of inspection of local famine conditions had been planned. The Colonel and Major kindly offered to accompany the waiting mandarin, giving us the chance to break away and do some investigating in places not prepared. We insisted that we were ardent disciples of Lao-tzu, and that we *must* not pass the mountain of the Exponent of the Tao, without visiting his shrine on the summit.

It was two hours' hard climb, said the officials. Oh, that was nothing—we were used to climbing. But it was impossible to engage chairs at such short notice. Ah, but we were accustomed to walking. Well, if we insisted, he would try to find chairs—would we please to wait? We would not, we would strike out at once. Pilgrims had told us that it was a mere two hour ascent. Yes, yes, but didn't we know that the pilgrims always minimized their hardships?—as the Sage said, "True Pilgrims make light of the journey." Really we would need four hours to make it, and we could not get back on the same day.

But when they saw that we lacked the courtesy to give in, they told off a half dozen soldiers for our escort, and set off with the two American officers. We struck out, carrying our rawhide quirts, which afforded some protection from dogs and added much emphasis to conversation. Desultory flakes of snow were falling at the top, but below, the valley lay bright in sunshine. It extended as far as eye could reach: a lovely patchwork of varied green,—wheat, barley, millet, maize and indigo—with here and there a spot of golden mustard.

This land has been farmed for five thousand years, yet no soil is richer. Three crops are often raised in one season. Near at hand, in geometric beauty, lay the city, with its old ramparts and suburb walls. Directly beneath, at the foot of the hill and protected by an ancient semi-circular wall, snuggled the Hwa Ching Yuan of Yang Gway-fay,—partly ruined, partly in repair,—the amethystine lake gleaming in its setting of golden porcelain roofs. Little wonder that the Old Sage loved to assemble his disciples at such a spot.

In a small mud-and-thatch shelter, hung by contrast with costly silk banners, we found the “jade-seat”—a large divan-shaped stone, upon which tradition has it that Lao-tzu taught his Tao. The lone priest who kept the place under lock and key would not allow us to draw back the draperies for a snapshot. The temple that once sheltered the relic had been destroyed by Kansu Moslems on one of their iconoclastic expeditions late in the last century.

Further back on the mountain, which was a spur of

the Hwa range, was an elaborate temple edifice which served refreshments to pilgrims. We ordered tea and wine, slipped out while our escort was eating, and made off through the foothills.

"Let's see about this famine," said Hayes.

We struck a trail and followed it to the walled courtyards screening a cave home. An old peasant dame welcomed us. She was unusually "open," as the Chinese say. She took us in and showed us her flour bin. She was engaged in mixing dough, and had a big batch of fire-bakers laid out for roasting in the charcoal oven at one side of the cave. A shelf, the length of the other side, was burdened with crude kitchen implements, and under it was a row of large earthenware *gangs* (jars) containing various kinds of dried beans, salted kraut and vegetable pickles. In the rear of the cave, separated by an open earthen arch from the living room, was the stable containing several donkeys and an ox.

"What of your supply of grain?" we asked.

She opened a low door in the side of the cave and showed us the granary, a small room hollowed out of the earth, which contained bins several feet deep with wheat, millet, and barley.

"You have quite enough to take you through to harvest?" I asked.

"Yes," she replied, "with careful planning, quite enough."

I was interested to know where the rough fodder for the animals was kept. She led us to the stalls which were

quite clean and dry, and pointed above the manger to a shaft cut through some thirty feet of earth to the field above the cave. "Alongside the well's mouth is the hay-cock," she said briefly, rather pitying my ignorance of labor-saving devices among the Children of the Clay. The "well" acted as ventilator as well as hay chute. Another "laid" flue took care of the smoke from the *kang*, which extended clear across the front of the room except for the door space.

As we went out, I noticed a narrow passageway next to the oven. "May I look in here?" I asked the dame. She graciously acceded, but said: "You will not understand. You foreigners don't know our gods."

It was the sanctuary of the cave home. At the far end of the tiny room, a *Gwan-yin*, "Merciful Goddess," occupied a little niche behind a lighted taper. On either side, upon ledges left when the walls were cut, stood the ancestral tablets.

The woman directed us to several cave hamlets along the mountainside. Not all the homes were as prosperous as hers. In some, animals had been sold in order to conserve grain, yet the householders said confidently that they could get through the season. They were very friendly, and leashed in their fierce dogs as we went through their courtyards.

Then we passed through a copse to another hamlet to find the atmosphere suddenly different. "Yes, we are starving to death," said a man standing rather belligerently outside of the first courtyard.

188 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

"May we look in your dwelling?" asked Hayes.

Reluctantly, the man let us pass. Several women and children were standing forlornly in the center of the cave, their hands on their stomachs, registering great distress.

"Oh! We have had nothing to eat these three days!" gasped a young woman.

At the moment, I noticed one of the children, who looked sleek enough, trying hard to swallow a large mouthful of "fire-baker." It's not easy stuff to down in a hurry.

In the dooryard of the next home I noted that one of the alleged starving was busy getting something heavy over the wall in a sack. As we came out of the mud-walled area onto the "street" of the hamlet, we caught a glimpse of a uniformed horseman plunging into the brush and down the mountainside.

At the next house, the inmates met us and escorted us at once to the grain room. There was no grain, to be sure, but the omnipresent round bins of thin wood were likewise gone! A thin trail of red millet—it requires an almost water-tight container to hold this oily little seed—caught my eye. I followed it out the door of the cave, and across to a brush heap in the yard. There, poorly hidden, were four or five of the round bins, with enough grain to feed a small family several months.

"Let's just revisit that other cave," said Hayes.

We went back and into the courtyard. The dogs checked us for a moment until we cowed them with our riding whips. Then we stepped abruptly into the home, without calling out the customary "Please, please!"

The situation seemed unchanged except that the entire group, instead of only one child, was making great efforts to swallow, and a bowl of bean-soup was overturned on the dirt floor. One youngster was licking the ends of a pair of chopsticks and eyeing me belligerently. One of the blankets on the *kang*, which would usually be neatly rolled, was strangely mussed. Pulling it aside, I disclosed a large wooden tray containing, if not an appetizing, at least a bulky meal, half eaten.

"So you have found something to eat!" said Hayes. "Beware lest you overdo it. Starving stomachs must take food with care." The Chinese language lends itself beautifully to satire!

The little fellow with the chop-sticks seemed to think that after twice interrupting his meal we were going to deprive him of it altogether. He dashed forward and rescued his bowl. The women, in high-pitched voices, began to scold us. But one of them beckoned for silence and stepped forward, curtseying.

"We have deceived you," she said. "We have enough food to keep us alive. But the *tingchai* who warned us to prepare for your coming, said that you are so abundant in your country that it would be no wrong to lead you into sending some of your pity-money to us."

Our anger died out as we followed her gesture toward the bare walls of the cave, the rough unpainted table and benches, and the coarse, cotton garments of the children.

"Who can blame them?" said Hayes, and his voice was

190 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

husky as we stepped out again into the setting sun. We crashed down the mountain, with the sun at our backs. "But we've got some cunning officials to deal with here!" he added.

XIX

POLITICS AND THE FAMINE FUND

THE next morning, in lacquered and gilded carts, we advanced amid our escort toward Sian, ancient metropolis of northwest China, called Sian-fu from its former rank as a *fu* or departmental city. Eight *li* from this center the Wei is spanned by the *Ba* ("Eight") Bridge, a marvel of solid masonry a quarter mile in length.

Here Mr. Chang halted our carts to await the official committee of welcome. The temptation of the flocks of geese, ducks, and teal, with an occasional heron and stork, was too much for us. Like school-boys on holiday, we were out with guns. Some soldiers tagged behind, retrieving for us. I aimed at a red goose, missed—and killed a duck. So thick were birds in the green fields along the river, that it was almost impossible not to hit something.

A big white stork stood on one leg and picked calmly at his plumage. For some time I carefully avoided shooting in his direction, but his impudence got the better of me

192 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

and I fired deliberately into the ground at his foot, to see if I could scare him. He simply crumpled in a heap and died! I couldn't find a wound on him. My hitherto slight respect for the courage of his tribe became smaller. But as Chinese prize both their plumage and meat, I saved him for the civil governor.

After an hour, the committee arrived. It consisted of a jolly and intelligent prefect mandarin representing the civil governor, the hale old Belgian, Father Ding—his original surname gone the way of his European dress—bearing the Roman Catholic Bishop's card, and the young foreign secretary of the local Y. M. C. A., representing the Protestant mission community which was composed of British Baptists and Scandinavian-Americans. The prefect bore the civil governor's card, and said His Excellency would meet us at the city gate. Chen Shu-fan, the military governor or tuchun, merely sent a card by a junior officer, and a message that he would be glad to entertain us any time we wished to call at headquarters. We immediately conceived a liking for him.

The few miles across the plain to the buttressed city wall were quickly passed. With the possible exception of Babylon, no oriental city has been so protected by massive rampart and gaping moat. The triple gates are so arranged that one must wind a figure "S" from one to the next between the high walls. At the last, Civil Governor Liu Djen-hwa was waiting—a man of middle age, gentle, informal manner, and cherubic face. We discovered him to be a graduate of the Peking School of

Justice, and holder of post-graduate honors by virtue of a lieutenancy under White Wolf, celebrated brigand and terrorist of the days of Manchu decadence.

White Wolf had seemed little hampered by the armies sent against him, but he made a mistake when he attacked the Moslem community of Kansu. The ferocity and coördination among the followers of the Prophet surprised his freebooters, used to the lowland Chinese. Most of them perished before the severe upland winter, discreetly abetted by Mohammedan knives and pitchforks. Yuan Shih-kai's announcement of the death of White Wolf was occasion for national rejoicing—yet I heard confidentially that the brigand chief lived on under secret agreement with Yuan whereby the authorities respected his incognito on condition of his keeping the peace.

Governor Liu however had escaped with a small force to the mountains of Honan, where he operated independently until Tuchun Chen at Sian, as related in the next chapter, begged his aid against rivals a year or so prior to our visit. As a reward for his timely intervention, Peking acquiescing, Liu received the civil governorship of Shensi. There was little of the "civil" about his power. He maintained himself through his condottieri, now legitimized as "special gendarmerie." From hints along the way we had gathered that deep mistrust had developed between the associate rulers, and that Liu was scheming to supplant Chen altogether. More of this anon.

The governor introduced us to a wealthy Mr. Bun.

"This gentleman will be your host," he said. "You will forgive my not taking you to my own humble shelter, but it is rude compared with the sumptuous mansion of Mr. Bun, which affords more nearly the comfort to which you are accustomed in your own western homes." At this point General Wu Pei-fu's officer took leave of our party, saying he had seen us safely into care of Governor Liu, and would now hasten back. However, he entered the cart in which the governor drove off. We climbed in with Mr. Bun, and the cavalcade moved toward his gardens. Mr. Bun explained that he also was a stranger in west China, having been brought from the coast to establish a flour mill in Sian, where fine hard wheat could be bought for fifteen cents a bushel. We gathered that although his milling company "failed," he had built himself a mansion out of the "wreckage" and had so impressed the civil governor with his financial acumen that Liu had made him his financial manager.

On our way he told us briefly the tragedy of several other attempts at industrialization in this ancient seat of the Tangs. A soap factory was doing fairly, and establishment of a modern oil press and a cotton spinning mill was being mooted. Stock in the latter had been issued under supervision of the Chamber of Commerce, but the promoters had been badly "sold" on a consignment of worthless spindles from Japan. Other hopeful ventures had turned out badly. A shallow draft steamer representing the resources of one company lay rusting on a bar in the Wei river.

The saddest story was that of the city electric light system. A second-hand plant from some other part of the world had been imported and set up, and the city wired. It gave light after a fashion, but made so much noise that it kept the entire city awake. Finally the annoyed Tuchun closed the plant. The most fortunate enterprise was the winery, where under the kindly instruction of Father Ding, excellent grape vintage was being bottled in quantity.

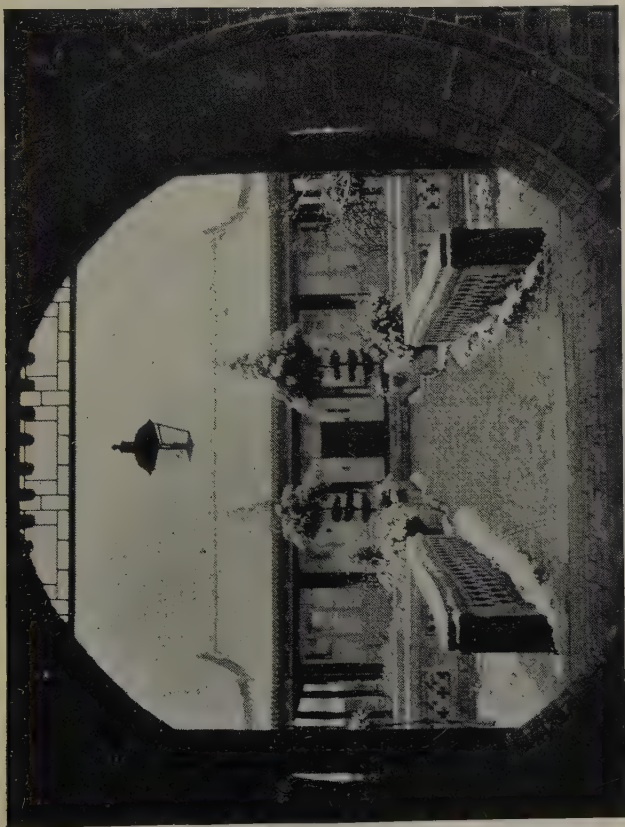
Our route was down a broad avenue leading through the Manchu district, ruined during the revolution. The recent destruction blended into the almost bare stretch of the walled grounds of the Tang palace. The brick facing of the eighth century imperial walls of moulded loess had been almost entirely stolen, but their body still stood. The grounds had become a public playground and pasturage. A swell in the earth, and the protruding tops of some round pillars, marked the site where the newly-formed Archæological Society of Peking might dig up mementos of the glories of the Tangs and discover a key to the relation between Grecian and Chinese art and architecture.

The walls of Sian once enclosed one and a half million persons, and they now protect about a third as many. Her Main Street was coated with mud. Traffic was making a detour to avoid an enthusiastic dog fight. A Cantonese governor in republican revolutionary days had ordered all houses along the avenue torn down and replaced with uniform buildings of the queer receding-

second-story Cantonese type. The Sianese obeyed, but refused to live in the "monkey cages," which stood empty while all business moved onto side streets. The Cantonese structures, none too permanently built, were nearing the stage where they would have to be replaced by buildings in the local style.

In the center of the city we passed under the Bell Tower, massive enough for its arches to take in the intersection of the principal north-and-south street with the Avenue. On a framed sign-board, high up under the pointed eaves, was the legend, *Wen wu sheng di*—"Civilly and militarily we surmount the earth." In the western part of the city its counterpart, the Drum Tower, bears the words, *Sheng ming gao tien*—"Our fame is high as heaven." The city of the Hans and Tangs does not suffer from excessive modesty.

We were soon comfortably located in a large enclosed pavilion surrounded by the goldfish pools and flowering shrubs of Mr. Bun's garden. A slight fall of snow added exquisite beauty to the rockeries and trees. In strange contrast to its artistic surroundings was the interior of the hall, hung with yards upon yards of starched white sheeting stretched upon wires to pander to our western love of privacy. To any doubter that white makes a good color for mourning, I would like to show that room! Denham took one look and said we would find him at his *hong* or branch office. The agents there were Moslems of a fine type, and we later enjoyed a delightful feast at their cleanly premises.



MR. BUN'S MANSION WHERE THE SENGCHANG ENTERTAINED US



"PALS"

Tuchun Chen Shu-fan and Sengchang Liu.

After our ceremonious installation, when we were free to talk the Colonel and the Major related their experiences while we had been wandering on Lao-tzu's Mountain. They had been taken in pomp through the town and several outlying villages, and shown, at public squares, crowds of people who came forward, pleading distress. Such mass stage-acting would be impossible among any people less generously equipped with dramatic instinct. But the true situation was disclosed by one old professional beggar. He came along and indignantly berated the populace for not keeping to their own trades and leaving his to him!

Little by little we penetrated the politics of the situation, cleverly involved with native and mission charities of honest intent. Any Chinese neighborhood will have its examples of real distress. Added to that, hordes of refugees were coming in from the east. Through lack of mutual coöperation the missionaries easily were misled to believe that just outside the limited area known to each personally, the conditions were approaching the state of true famine—hence their well-meaning seconding of Governor Liu's appeal. We began to see the important place we now held in his scheme to oust the governor's military confrère. It went out that we had come at Liu's instance, and the missionaries who had added their requests were unwittingly made to appear as his political partizans.

Chinese fashion, it was assumed that since we had taken the trouble to come, there was no question that our

198 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

report would be favorable toward a grant of the desired funds—provided our reception and entertainment were sufficiently grand. I doubt if the governor and his agents were even greatly concerned lest we discover the famine scenes shown to us to be “set-ups.” They simply felt we needed to see something about which to write home to our committee. Then foreign relief money would pour in, and bring favor to Governor Liu from both the populace, who would receive a portion, and sticky-fingered mandarins who would disburse it. In plain English, we were to finance the civil governor’s campaign to become provincial dictator.

Even the missionaries seemed to have succumbed to the contagious spirit of the Chinese political farce. Amazing lack of coöperation and responsibility among them made them easy prey. Some funds from Shanghai and elsewhere had already passed through their hands. At San Yuan, a day’s journey north of Sian, a miniature revolutionary government existed, with *de facto* control of a couple of counties, and claims to the whole province. An absurd division in several Protestant missions followed the line of political schism, and we found an interdenominational committee at each capital—each aiming to cover the province, each duplicating the other’s relief work in some counties while others were untouched by either.

Their one connecting link was the Italian Bishop of the powerful Roman Catholic mission, regarded as a political ally of Liu. He had a cathedral at both places, and functioned as chairman of the Sian committee, while making

his influence felt at all times in San Yuan affairs through his proxy, the universally congenial Father Ding.

The "competition" between the committees was further complicated by the mutual distrust between Catholic and Protestant elements. Scientific apportionment had to be overruled to keep a nice balance in the amounts going to areas where Catholic and Protestant respectively predominated. Each feared the other would use the common charity to draw new members. The Protestant secretary at Sian confessed he could not vouch for seventy-five of the seventy-five thousand deaths reported by him to our Peking headquarters; he thought it his duty as secretary to obey without protest the chairman's instructions to transmit the figures. Another source of abuse was the distribution of relief through the Chinese county mandarins, and further, its distribution in money, instead of grain, increasing the chance for loot. One enterprising magistrate, we found, had printed his own county currency, distributing that in lieu of the relief funds kept as security in his own hands. He explained to us that this saved labor and overhead cost in distribution. Incidentally, his agents were buying in the paper at a fraction of its face value.

It seemed, when we came to go into details, that the main basis of the county estimates was the proportionate importance of the area in Sengchang Liu's political project. That there was much distress could not be denied. Conditions in some peasant communities approximated famine. But such investigation as we could

make, in spite of the embarrassing entertainment of Governor Liu, convinced us that such cases were due to opium-growing and political disturbances, rather than "act of God."

We took the position that our committee's foreign funds (chiefly American) should serve solely to offset natural calamities, and not to save Chinese from the results of their own political and moral shortcomings, so long at least as thousands in the coast provinces remained uncared for. Hayes advised his committee to reduce drastically the Shensi appropriations and withhold remittances entirely until the local administration could be reformed. My press despatches backed his stand.

Once such a suggestion had been made from the outside, it was concurred in by practically all charitable elements—Catholics, Protestants, Chinese Red Cross, and native private philanthropy. Hayes' penchant for committee work amounts to a vice. For the next two weeks he was the busiest man in the Middle Kingdom, first formulating the basis for coördination, and then revising the county estimates. When one magistrate on the far Kansu border was informed that for the present only a tenth of the six thousand "sufferers" in his county could be cared for he sent back word that he had no sufferers and was returning the appropriation. His innocence must have been provoking to the governor who had attempted both to render aid and to secure some favor by having a famine report made up for him.

When we told the genial Sengchang (provincial elder)



"A REAL CIVILIZED CHRISTIAN WAR—AIRPLANES AND EVERYTHING"

Liu that we were recommending the cutting off of further funds, he merely smiled sophistically and doubled our entertainment. He probably thought we were giving out such statements to cover ourselves.

Sengchang Liu provided us with everything that a Chinese host would give, together with everything that he supposed might belong to western hospitality. A bathroom was walled off with sheets, equipped with wooden tubs and floored with woven rush mats. (Chinese gentlemen always go to the public bath house.) The difficulty was in persuading the servants to give us enough cold water to make the bath endurable. In the midst of our ablutions we were given the choice of Chinese tea or a water tumbler of the priest's wine. We usually chose the wine, although it was a bit hard on a before-breakfast stomach.

Our host had found a cook who pretended to know foreign dishes. He must have got his idea of what white men eat from modern Chinese novels. But as he was the only foreign-style cook available in Shensi, he got his own price from the civil governor for serving us.

XX

A TYPICAL ADVENTURER

AT the first opportunity, we called on Military Governor Chen. Two rough-looking soldiers ushered us into a large, unfurnished, brick-floored hall and withdrew. Soon a short man with an unhealed scar over one eye and a lower lip which sagged at one end, came in, his black cotton gown flapping unbuttoned below his throat.

"What careless servants they keep around this place!" I thought to myself.

"Will the Tuchun see us this morning?" I asked him.

"I can see you now," was the quiet answer. "Please excuse the rudeness of my quarters."

He ignored our embarrassment and we were soon at ease.

We had come to investigate famine conditions? Just like the big-hearted American. What was the situation? Well, he didn't know much about it. His confrère, the Sengchang, could tell us more. There was a distinct twinkle in his eyes. By the way, he asked, had we heard of the quake destruction in Kansu? *There* was an oppor-

tunity for relief that ought to appeal to philanthropic foreigners!

He got the postal gazetteer off the floor in one corner and we were soon gathered about an unvarnished table listening to his intimate description of the affected district.

"You will need good horses for that country," he said. "The roads are entirely destroyed—you cannot get through with carts. Camels are too slow."

"Tuchun," I said, "we are told that all the good horses in Shensi are in your stables." (Common report had it that his official offers to "trade" could seldom be avoided or refused by the owner of a good animal.)

"Ah!" he spat, "good horses are not bred east of Kansu. These here are half mud turtle and half jackass. I get mine *from the west*—I'll give you each a good mount."

We thanked him. "Perhaps," said Hayes as we went out, "that is a hint to be on our way."

So this was the romantic rascal-hero whose exploits, narrow escapes, disregard of convention, abandon in the face of enemies and intriguers were the talk of all Shensi. Chen is an ideal example of the rare dare-deviltry in Chinese character; an embodiment of the occasional reaction against the usual orderly life.

The old examination system allowed those afflicted with an excess of *ging-shen* or ambition to employ their gifts in the service of the existing system, tests being used to select civil officers, while athletic preëminence assured a chance in the army. The overthrow of the old

order has left these impetuous spirits to carve their own fortunes out of a tempting chaos.

Like his confrère Liu, Chen had been a bandit, but he got his early training as a regular army officer. The republican revolution left him in command of one of several unattached forces wandering about Shensi. Yuan Shih-kai sent out a governor, a certain Lo Jien-jang (the same that was murdered by Little Hsu in Tientsin) to restore order. Being unable to suppress Chen, Lo discreetly appointed him "Pacification Commissioner." Chen made good in this position by establishing a working agreement between the two remaining Robin Hoods of the province, a lanky, one-eyed ruffian, Gwo Jien, and a heavy-weight hero, Hu Li-seng. But the latter, a muscular, overgrown boy, who rode a white stud mule (since no horse could carry his 300 pounds), resented the arrogant manners of Governor Lo's son, and kidnapped that pampered youth. Chen intervened as "mediator," and got possession of the prisoner. He deposited him in the house of a missionary whom he induced to act as go-between for the sake of peace, and Lo, knowing that his son was in safety, could accede (without fear of being double-crossed) to Chen's demand for resignation to him of his governmental seal and military command as a reward for the rescue. Ex-Governor Lo then left for Tientsin, where shortly after, owing to rivalry in the Peace and Joy Club, Little Hsu killed him.

About then, Li Yuan-hung took over the Presidency in Peking, and recognized Chen as military governor,



SHENSI'S ROBIN HOODS

Hu Li-seng the "Big Boy" bandit and the sanctimonious, bearded Yu Yu-ren.

while sending out a civil administrator. But when Chang Hsun restored the Manchus for a few days, Chen declared civil governors to be a republican institution and forthwith deported his colleague. Thus the Peking melodrama had its side-shows in the provinces.

Meanwhile, Hu, the big bandit, was transformed into the instrument of righteousness and republican aspirations, having been recruited to the Sun Yat-sen junta of Canton by an active "Sun-worshipper," Yu Yu-ren, a Shanghai journalist, who brought strong arguments for the republic in the form of money furnished by overseas Chinese. Canton was thus provided with an outpost of its power fifteen hundred miles from headquarters. Of course any Chinese bandit would become a "reformer" to exchange his uncertain pickings for the sure graft of an official, whether in Sun Yat-sen's republic or anything else. (For persistency in defeat, Sun rivals our own W. J. B. One cause of his failures is this opportunistic taking up with any condottieri needing a new connection—who betray him at the first profitable occasion.) Thus was founded the government at San Yuan.

Hu, the big boy bandit, and Yu, the sanctimonious, silken-bearded propagandist, were a pair worth sketching. They had a hold on Chen,—the fact that their stronghold was near a great estate which had been taken over by the Tuchun. A sort of gentlemen's agreement secured them exemption from his attack so long as its crops were unmolested. This, of course, did not prevent an endless war of intrigue between the parties.

206 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

Big Hu had once inspired a palace revolution against Chen, but the Tuchun vaulted the back wall, rallied his cavalry and was soon reestablished. Then a conference was arranged. Each marched out at the head of his army to be examined for concealed weapons by the other's adjutant before the meeting alone between the lines. Considering his advantage in size and strength, Hu probably felt safe enough. But little Chen, who had driven out with two pair of reins, jerked one pair loose and lassoed Big Hu as he was getting out of his cart. Hooking the lines to his cart he turned and drove like mad, dragging the big Hu prisoner to his own lines while the unlucky man's soldiers watched in confusion. They rallied to their chief's rescue later, and with the coöperation of the one-eyed Gwo Jien besieged Chen in Sian.

At this juncture appeared a brigade sent by Chang Tso-lin of Mukden to wipe out "Canton sympathizers" including Hu. But the one-eyed Gwo showed a streak of the ability which was later to gain him prominence—and also attention from the "Christian General's" assassins. Gwo persuaded the Manchurians to unite with the forces besieging Chen,—each side probably supposing that with Chen out of the way, it could become master in the province.

Then it was Chen called for help from bandit-chief Liu Djen-hwa of Honan, the too-successful ally with whom he was now in secret contest. Liu's force, aided by the village "vigilance committees," compelled the Manchurians, whom they regarded as outlanders, to

withdraw from the siege, and return to the railhead. (This was the very brigade which I discovered in Wu Pei-fu's rear on that night ride during the Anfu war.) Liu, the newcomer, chased the Hu men back to San Yuan, and Gwo retired to an ancient fortress on the western border. Chen kept Hu himself in honorable confinement for a year. Then the Tuchun released the prisoner on his promise to become an ally in supporting the Anfu Club, which, unknown to both, was even then on the point of falling before Wu Pei-fu's advance.

But Big Hu was back with his men at San Yuan when this news came through, and affairs returned to where they were before, except that Liu now became civil governor, and rumors were rife that he was secretly leaguering Hu and Gwo against his confrère Chen. Furthermore, he, Liu, thanked us in an off-moment for bringing Wu Pei-fu's officer to Sian—which set us thinking.

Through all these personal futilities the people suffered—not so much from the actual fighting, as from the opium raising encouraged by all factions for the purposes of revenue. Farmers were induced, even coerced, to plant opium—so that the authorities might confiscate the crop when ripe under pretext of the anti-opium decrees and sell it for their personal profit. In some districts the resistance of the villagers was met by destruction of their houses, leaving rich lands idle.

By such methods Chen had become a great landlord, and in addition, his doddering but rascally old father went about preëmpting whatever looked good to him,

208 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

the filial son seeing to it he had his way. I had it from the Commissioner of Finance that opium fines alone in three years had supplied the two governors with the equivalent of four million U. S. dollars. Even after they had made the generous gesture of personally subscribing a quarter of the million-and-a-half-dollar yearly budget passed by the Provincial Assembly (queerly permanent under shifting executives) there was evidently a net remainder of graft which was well worth quarrelling over.

The head of the provincial Educational Association, introducing me preliminary to an address endured by that body, made the pun:

“Our starvation is not from the lack of *wu gu* (grain) but excess of *wu li* (bayonet rule).”

Not only was opium ruining the growers, but the people at large. Peddlers sold “black molasses” in sticks like chewing gum—four smokes for about six cents. The poppy juice that went into this having been pressed out by hand day by day from the growing pod, the seed, which is harmless and nourishing, went into confectionery; there remained a residue of dried husks, basis for a villainous opiate “tea,” which sold at a hundred and ten coppers a *chin*,¹ or about twenty-five cents a pound, avoirdupois. About the only sheltered valley land—the sort suited to poppy culture—which was not given up to it in Shensi, was in limited areas subject to raids by inde-

¹ A *chin*, pronounced “gin,” and named “catty” by British pioneers, is the Chinese “pound.” Like ours, it has sixteen “ounces” but it is a third heavier. Queerly though, it is the only exception to the ancient Chinese metrical system of weights and measures.

pendent bandits. Opium is the first demand of these fellows, and farmers daring to raise it are due for their attention. So, in the land of paradoxes, banditry has its moral influence. However great Shensi, this seat of the Glory that was Cathay, is decadent, blighted by the drug. Ancient ramparts and pagodas everywhere tower above wrecks of cities that harbor a population shiftless and degenerate.

Tuchun Chen was amiable enough toward us, as to everyone. But he had only one confidant, Newman, a Chinese-born Briton, who was provincial Inspector of Posts, a service in which a few foreigners, chiefly French, are still employed. Newman's Chinese wife and family resided down at a port. He lived alone in lordly comfort with his servants, dressed for dinner, and found amusement in bird hunting, grand opera phonograph records, and the spectacle of local politics. He constituted in his person the foreign commercial community of Sian, and maintained in isolated dignity his side of the now fast-disappearing feud between the foreign commercial and missionary communities in China. He was cynical in regard to the famine.

"The Tuchun has closed the local home for indigents," he told me. "He isn't getting much out of this relief game, but he thinks he might as well save a little there."

The Shensi side-show typified the conditions in all the semi-independent provinces of China. As has been said, the same Chinese skill at intrigue displayed in national affairs at Peking is found in every circle, down to the

corps of servants in private households. Ideals are submerged in the infinite tangle of personal ambition and pursuit of immediate advantage. Those who win to power and affluence carry the spirit of their struggle with them. Fortunately, the sense of humor makes play of what would otherwise be unendurable. Only the bonds of family and consciousness of common interest with those of like craft, are real enough to imbue altruism. What valuable extension such motives may yet undergo, with enlarged vision, was foreshadowed by the Student Revolution.

All in all, Tuchun Chen had the makings of a noble Asiatic despot. Who knows but that in an atmosphere not yet contaminated with the germs of "liberty" and "republicanism," he might have developed into another Kublai Khan, or Yung Loh? Personally, he was a man of athletic habits, simple tastes, and distinct proclivity to culture. He maintained a private school for children of officers and prominent citizens which conformed to high academic standards. Between military and political campaign activities (reduced to a minimum by his efficient assassination squad), he took pains to see that school work suffered from no let-down on the part of either instructors or pupils. As I said before, he spanked with his own hand a hundred and thirty young men of the school who elected to join the student movement.

President Leighton Stuart of Peking Christian University journeyed to far Sian at Chen's request, to advise means for fulfilling his dearest ambition, the development

of the Sian academy into a university. He was received in pomp at about the same time we were being welcomed by the Civil Governor. Chen had many an investment outside of Shensi, especially in the foreign-protected ports, and he already had been able to do a favor to learning in China by selling at a much reduced price a noble estate near Peking to Dr. Stuart's institution as a new location. He was interested in getting a memorial hall erected on the campus of this religious institution to his notorious old father. Imagine a memorial to Jesse James at Yale!

Chen had equipped a luxurious officers' club, among the remarkable appurtenances of which was a billiard table that cost near a thousand dollars to import through the defiles. "Little push ball" is popular since the "Y" introduced it in China, but probably this is its farthest west. At this club the Tuchun installed his guests—with combined consideration for his own safety and for their comfort in many instances. However, none could apprehend danger from the mild-mannered Doctor Stuart, high type of second-generation China-born Occidental. It was pleasant to sit with him at tea and compare experiences, as was our privilege before departing. The China-born do have a natural grasp of the Chinese mind. There are those who profess to see in the third generation an actual conformity even in physical characteristics.

XXI

LITTLE ORCHID, OF THE TUCHUN'S GARDEN

SEVERAL days after our visit to the Tuchun, the Civil Governor gave a banquet in our quarters at which the guests of honor were his confrère in office, the bishop, and the dean of the Protestant missions. Newman was invited, but did not come, seeing there would be missionaries present.

Chinese character was illustrated by the outwardly fraternal conduct of the ranking official gentlemen. They bowed informally to one another, gossipped, and patted one another on the back. When we were seated at the meal, which, being "foreign style," began with tinned pineapples and asparagus soup, a servant of the Tuchun appeared with a basket of simple relishes and boiled rice, which he placed before his master. The Tuchun rose and explained with much pardon-begging that he was on a diet owing to the scar above his eye, and had therefore taken the liberty to bring his own special food. Then Governor Liu rose to say it would be pleasure to have his own cooks prepare the same, fresh and hot, in the kitchen. But the Tuchun could not think of causing such

Little Orchid, of the Tuchun's Garden 213

extra bother. It was clear that Chen was going to run no risk of getting "something" in his food. Ultimately the two got seated again and we resumed the meal.

Hands on revolvers close behind the Tuchun's chair, stood his bodyguard,—not a chance for Liu's faithful waiters to spill a crumb in his rice bowl! There was a suspicious bulge in Chen's padded garment. "Ah," I thought, "now I know why he affects that careless style of leaving open the bosom of his gown!"

It was true, I learned later, that Tuchun Chen drew from the breast—and accustomed as he was to rest his hand in his bosom, he plainly had the advantage of anyone drawing from the belt. Tuchun Chen also refused his host's wine, pleading his wound. But Sengchang Liu was recklessly at ease. He liberally tasted every dish and bottle first, as a Chinese host should, and insisted upon a drinking match between China and America, picking on Hayes, who declined on the ground of being a missionary.

After the bishop had intervened to arbitrate in Hayes's favor, Liu chose me. I tried every ruse to escape, but he would not be denied. We started off, taking cup for cup, while the Tuchun kept tally. Then, thinking that chance might favor me, I called "fingers." In view of the likelihood that we would soon be unequal to complex arithmetic, we took the simplest form of this game. Each would throw out a hand, part of its fingers extended. If the number of fingers showing on our two hands was even, he drank, if odd, I.

214 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

It appeared that neither would collapse under the native wine. So the servants brought on Hennessey's Three Star Brandy, and poured it, straight, into water tumblers. And then I recalled that I had work that afternoon. I appealed to the American Army for relief. Somewhat reluctantly Major Horsfal consented to be the martyr. Rising quietly in my place, he took my glass.

Governor Liu was almost too far gone to notice the shift, but he still kept his feet. Horsfal drank tumbler after tumbler of brandy, spilling all he could into his collar. Then, suddenly, Liu toppled over, and his men carried him out. We led our shaken hero back to quarters, thickly insisting,

"America wins—that was the Chinaman they toted out."

We would not deny it and he went to bed happy. The army deserved and got credit, although we had to admit Liu "the best man" for such a tournament fairly played.

Leaving the major to snore on his laurels, we put in an afternoon at the "Forest of Tablets," a vast array of literary and monumental souvenirs accumulated through centuries at Sian. The central treasures are the finely engraved obelisk bearing the "Ode to Filial Piety" by the hand of the great lover Tang, and a portrait of Confucius engraved in the seventeenth century from a decayed painting, thought to represent an authentic original.

Around these, in kiosks and sheds, stand thousands of relics—a mine of archæological lore unexplored by scholars. The latest addition, near the gate, is the well

known Nestorian Tablet—not esteemed as a cultural relic, but recently put inside for safe keeping since a Danish “antiqueer” fell short by only a little in his attempt to steal the several-ton mass out of the province. There was some scruple about the irreverence of taking rubbings from the portrait of the Sage but the prints were to be had at a price. We smiled that we should be thought credulous enough to accept in explanation of the price the statement that the rubbings could only be made in the dark of the moon, when the spirit could not see. One of these rubbings was destined to reach the University of Ann Arbor, through the courtesy of Mr. Frederick Stevens.

The incidents of Liu's feast were but preliminary to those which justify the title of this chapter, and which transpired in the return party that the Tuchun gave to Liu at his officers' club a few days later. Sengchang Liu came bumping across the street slabs in a Ford. The Tuchun clattered up on horseback. He was keen to get a few pointers on billiards while waiting for dinner. There Drysdale shone while I acted as interpreter. How should I convey the colonel's phrase: “to put a little ‘English’ on the ball”?

“That phrase, ‘English,’” I attempted, “means to give a crooked twist to the ball.”

“Ah, I see,” said Chen. “That's why you call it ‘English!’—but what do the English call it?”

For the banquet, we adjourned to the floor of the Tuchun's theater, run in connection with the Club.

Dr. Stuart was present, also the Tuchun's rascally old father, and a guest whom we had not met—a large man, marked by grace and dignity of carriage, a bald pate above a ring of graying hair, and a deep fatherly voice. He was one of the original "boys" of Yuan Shih-kai, who long survived his chief, and was but now out of office. However, as an "Ex-" does not adhere to an official name in China, he was still "Tuchun" Chang Gwang-yuan of Kansu. The Moslem chiefs of that western province had forced him out for looting the treasury and depreciating the local currency about 90 per cent. It seems the Chinese have grasped more of the possibilities in paper currency than in some of their other inventions adopted latterly by the West.

When the rumor got out that Chang of Kansu was en route for the British Concession at Tientsin with three million dollars in silver bars in his baggage, the Mohammedans planned to intercept him. But he quickly arranged with Chen of Sian for an invasion which distracted them long enough to cover his escape. He showed gratitude by leaving a fifth of the silver in Sian-fu. Considering the old Tuchun's helplessness we felt our Chen was self-denying not to take it all.

Between the courses of the banquet, we enjoyed the luxury of steaming towels laid on hands and face, and the pleasure of gourmandizing was further supplemented by the entertainment on the stage above us, where a troupe of fifty-two actors, including both men and women, presented play after play. Out here in far west China the

ban on actresses never held, although in Peking they are only now coming into favor again. The Manchu, Chien Lung, centuries ago issued an edict against actresses, out of sensitiveness lest they dishonor what had been his mother's profession. The result in the lowlands was a wonderful development of female impersonation—culminating in the great Mei Lan, stage idol of today.

On a red paper which the Tuchun passed around was listed the available repertoire—some thirty pieces in all. The guests chose as from a menu. Dr. Stuart picked good ones—he had had experience, but the fatherly old Kansu Tuchun's selections got him highest credit as a connoisseur. There is no tragedy on the Chinese stage: some pieces were light farces, others slow and stately historical comedy, and a third class was the *wu-hsi* or Military Play—a flashing babel of sound and fury, vehicle of marvellous acrobatics. The historical comedy scenes were often “parts” of a long “serial,” but the units of the performance ran only from twenty to forty minutes. The despairing Westerner who leaves a Chinese playhouse after four hours has often seen the end of ten plays without knowing it.

From ten A.M. till ten P.M. course after course, hour after hour, Chen's banquet went on. After the regular food came watermelon seeds, candied ginger with nuts, tea. Of course the stage only served to fill the lulls in conversation, and I got to passing my turn for choosing to the Kansu Tuchun—until my eye was taken by one little actress so exquisite in her work, so appealing in voice and

dainty in personality, that the rest of the troupe ceased to exist for me. As the piece came to its end, I beckoned to an officer of our host's guard.

"Who is she?" I asked.

"Fu Lan-ying," he replied. "Her father is head of the troupe, and as clever a rogue as ever was. Promising bud, isn't she?"

"*Lan-ying*—Orchid," I repeated. "Well named, the little beauty! I wonder if she has a leading part in any of these plays?"

"I will find out," said the officer.

He came back, smiling, from the dressing rooms.

"I asked her," he said. "She answered she had studied hard for the part of *Mu-lan*" (the Chinese Jeanne d'Arc) "but that she had not yet been allowed to play it before the Tuchun. She suggested that if you would ask for it—"

"Go tell the stage-master," I said, "that the Tuchun's guest asks for the 'Maid of War' next, Lan-ying starring."

A long intermission. Signs of perturbation behind the stage—but eventually the announcement card was hung and the play began.

The final scene showed a city wall. The commander of the assault and his staff were in brilliant armor under silken banners. They were mounted—just the quirks they carried showed it—yet to this day I imagine the rearing of their chargers. There was a battle, frightening in acrobatic activity—the commandant falls—his men are on the verge of rout. At the crisis enters his young

Little Orchid, of the Tuchun's Garden 219

wife Mu-lan in battle regalia. Although expecting a child, she seizes his sword, rallies the men, and the gate is forced. The host rushes in, leaving her outside with two faithful retainers. Her transport of victory changes as she looks upon her fallen consort into an agony of grief. She tears her armor open. Follows the birth of a child. A son! As a climax to the savage glee of martial victory, the convulsion of grief, the contortion of pain, comes the triumph of motherhood! "Care for him," she says, giving up the infant, "for he shall lead you. I go to join my lord." Silence.

It was overwhelming. In twenty minutes we had been carried through the range of primitive passions, ravished by a histrionic art native only to the stage of China. I could appreciate the emotions of the spectator who once rushed upon a too realistic stage villain and stabbed him.

There was no curtain. The actors arose and bowed. The house went into a storm of applause: "Lan-ying, Fu Lan-ying! She has arrived!" shouted Tuchuns, officers and literati. The heroine advanced to the very edge of the stage, stood demurely a moment, then bowed, three times—toward me. I rose at the Tuchun's table, and returned the compliment. Blushing furiously she fled the stage. There was another round of applause, this time for me, and now I blushed. The fatherly Tuchun from Kansu wanted to discuss her beauty. I left his side. There was a smile on the face of the Sengchang, and Chen of Shensi sat alert, lips parted as usual, regarding me quizzically.

"Your gallantry seems appreciated," remarked the colonel, laughing. The major, on the contrary, looked very sober.

"What do you think of her?" I asked.

"Wouldn't she go great in America!" he exclaimed, "I'd bet my last nickel on her."

The major's chance remark put a great idea into my head: it was to introduce the best of Chinese dramatic art to America with Lan-ying as the star. My plan failed but—that is another story. Perhaps the fatherly Tuchun of Kansu got her. She may even be happy.

XXII

ON TO THE QUAKE BELT

OUR jolly companions of the U. S. Army returned to Peking and we missed them sorely. Glad to get away from the excessive entertainment of Sian, Hayes and I resumed the northwest trail. A few days previously our gift horses from the Tuchun had arrived. Doubtless he had given orders to his cavalry commander to supply us with two of his best mounts, but that officer had taken advantage of the fact that one may not look a gift horse in the mouth. Mine turned out to be a high-spirited, brainy Kansu three-year-old, with a silken yellow coat peculiar to this breed.

The Kansu horse, reared in the same cave-shelters with humans, never knows man as anything but his friend, and his superior intelligence and changing moods may be due to this contact. But "Tuchun," as I dubbed my beauty, was having a fit of temperament over a saddle-sore caused by the stiff, wooden saddles, and the Chinese grooms were afraid to go within ten feet of him. Hence I got him. Western medicines, and my good McClellan

saddle, soon put him in shape, and gained for me the most loyal friend and entertaining comrade I have ever had among our dumb brothers.

Hayes had different luck. He received a broken-down, razor-backed Mongol nag, which he abandoned on a preliminary trip to San Yuan. The Sengchang heard of it and took pleasure in substituting the Tuchun's gift with a more serviceable mount. The horses disliked one another, and the unending jealousy between my "Tuchun" and Hayes's "Sengchang" provided us with much merriment.

Our route led out between the great mounds covering the remains of Han emperors, over the vari-colored rolling plain, segmented by hedges of wild lilac in a riot of bloom. At Hsiangyang we crossed the Ching river. A beautifully constructed ancient bridge supported by round granite columns took us from one shore to an island; thence we were carried by a large public ferry, weirdly lighted in the dusk by flaming pine torches and loaded to danger-point with vehicles and animals. The approach to the ancient bridge had collapsed. It was replaced with a flimsy timber structure floored with rushes overlaid with mud—an interesting side-light on "democracy" as it was taking in far west China.

In the old days a ruler, having established his throne, concentrated on building up the country to pass on to his issue: the new-type ruler, knowing that his sons can never succeed him, concentrates on milking his realm for a transportable fortune which his posterity can enjoy in

some foreign concession, safe from the revenge of an outraged people.

At county-seats en route we found missionaries growing anxious over intimations that the "starving populace" might take vengeance for their withholding of famine funds. Some of the missionaries lost their nerve and repudiated responsibility in our decision. One could not greatly blame them—surrounded, in this remote region, by a human flood ever threatening to engulf them! We encouraged the missionaries and warned the magistrates that we would watch their game. At the same time I aired the situation in the native and English-language press of the capital and port cities, and kept the American Legation informed through code wires.

These wires the Chinese officials apparently hesitated to intercept, but we soon found that Hayes's wires to the Relief Committee headquarters in Peking were not getting through. Reports reached us that Civil Governor Liu had finally been forced to accept the fact that we had actually cut off the funds, and that his wrath knew no bounds. Persons who would thus reward his hospitality (however reluctantly received) were in his estimation unworthy to live. The rumor must have reached our escort. One by one the soldiers dropped off until we were alone.

The Sian plain gave way again to loess defiles, this time dry and drifted deep with dust. Rough country containing rough people, degenerate from opium. Long after dusk we passed sinister figures in the grain-fields.

224 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

"Road-bandits," whispered our cartmen in fear. They pretended to be peasants hoeing their grain.

Looking back, we saw them stop a camel caravan which was following us. We pressed on until two in the morning to reach Yung-shou, "Everlasting Life." There we found all the inns wrecked. We were getting into the quake belt proper. Stopping two hours for food, we set off by moonlight again. At Binjo, thought we, there would be baths and good beds at the mission house.

That ancient city looked good to us and our tired animals as we emerged from the defiles under a blazing noon sun. But we were informed, to our dismay, that only the ladies of the mission were home—the men on circuit—and that therefore it would not be proper for them to receive us. We made our way down the long street looking for an inn. One was full of soldiers, another of brigands, and the third, we found, had been taken over by a troupe of travelling prostitutes—a rare but not unknown thing. Being forced to stop somewhere to feed the horses we chose the last. The brigands were going in and I heard much comment on the possible loot that might be got from us.

A flock of pigeons lit on the high-curved roof of the main hall. I let off both barrels of my shot-gun and brought down ten or fifteen fluttering birds. The ruffians and their painted ladies looked on in open-mouthed amazement. They had never seen a shot-gun.

"What kind of weapon is that?" asked one.

"A bandit-gun," I replied, "especially perfected in

America for bringing down a whole bandit gang at one shot."

We moved off amid the awed whispering of the men and the quips of the ladies.

A few miles outside of the city we spied an unusual caravan approaching. The lead animal was a stout mule, bearing two cages slung over its back; in one was a tiny antelope and in the other a baby panther. Between them, fluttering audaciously at the tip of a stocky pole, rode the Union Jack.

Mules, hunting dogs, camels, and an ornate *shenza*, empty, followed; the whole guarded by a half dozen big fellows in high leather boots and armed with long black-snakes. In a tea-house beside the road, not far off, we discovered the lord of this outfit, taking refreshment.

Denver-Jones was his name. He was selling life insurance, carrying secret messages for Tuchuns and political intriguers, and collecting wild animals. He was on his way out to civilization after having been buried in central Asia for three years. "What was the news of the great world?" he asked. "What were its latest fads—the latest in popular songs, in women's dress? Was the Peking Hotel completed?" He nearly wept for joy at having white men to talk to. Why were we setting out at this time of day?

We told him of our failure to find hospitality in Binjo.

"Ah, gentlemen, you shall turn back with me and be my guests tonight. I will show you how to travel in comfort in China."

226 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

"But," I protested, "the inns are full." He waved me aside. "Leave that to my men," he said. "Sit down here and have a whisky-water while they make ready our quarters."

His boy produced whisky and glasses from somewhere. Then cigars. We went down to the river-bed and shot at some geese. As dusk came we made our way leisurely back into the city.

The inn where we had nooned was empty, garnished and swept. Above its portal floated the British flag. In a neat row along one wall stood the cages of the animals, which were being taken out by turns and exercised by their scarred caretaker. An awning had been pitched in the court-yard. Under it were easy chairs of the folding type and in their midst a folding table supported the whisky flask. In two of the rooms rugs were on floor and *kang*, beds were made up with clean linen and white spreads, folding washstands were erected and curtains were hung at the paper windows! In a third room a folding bathtub was ready for use.

"Master's dress-suit?" said the Number One to Denver-Jones.

"No, boy; as these gentlemen haven't their clothes I will not dress tonight. Just bring me a clean duck coat."

He was as solicitous for our comfort as a grandmother. He constantly begged us to overlook his rough talk—he had been a long time away from civilization, we must know. Every article of his marvellous equipment over which we exclaimed he at once bestowed upon us. "Oh,



QUEER CARGOES ON THE NORTHWEST HIGHWAY

Deer Horns in the velvet en route from Siberia to Hankow to be made into pills for dyspeptic Chinese.

well," he was "heading for the coast—didn't need it any longer."

"Do you always take an entire inn to yourself?" we asked. "How do you do it?"

"Oh," he said, "it is quite simple. My men go on ahead with the flag. The people suppose it is some sort of foreign official expedition approaching. My men (have a look at them. I recruited them from a bandit gang, and they would die for me) enter the most likely inn, enlist the inn-keeper, and visit all the guests, offering them twenty coppers apiece to pay them for the trouble of finding another hostelry. The inn-keeper gets a like sum for each guest that departs, which is more than he would get if they remained. Usually the guests are glad to make the money, and equally glad to get out of sight of the animals and those loaded blacksnakes, which my fellows use for killing dogs. Of course my men use discretion. But even a bandit or a soldier will move for twenty coppers real money."

In the morning we left Denver-Jones, bearing away his shot-gun shells to replenish our slender supply, and a half-dozen pieces of folding furniture, which mostly remained folded until we got it home. We had gained a new vision of travel de luxe in mid-Asia, but we were too weak of will to apply it.

Denver-Jones moved on toward "civilization," wistfully eager—yet sad, for he knew he would be disillusioned. I had come to experience a profound sense of relief at not being burdened with all the troubles and crimes of the

228 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

world daily through a newspaper, and I did not envy him. . . . In one of the port cities of China or Japan he hoped to find a lady. She had been queen of his caravan for a time—a Russian refugee of high blood rescued in Turkestan. She had pined for the things of the white man before he did and he had sent her on ahead. . . . Long afterward I was glancing over the register at the Grand Hotel des Wagons Lits in Peking when I saw the name of Denver-Jones sprawled over the page. In answer to my inquiry the clerk said he had just checked out—bound for Mongolia—no, there was no woman with him.

Hayes and I made a hasty visit to a sixty-foot gilded and purpled Buddha, who sat in serene peace in his immense, cool cave far inside a mountain, tended only by thousands of doves which nested about his neck and ears. A soft shaft of light which came in through a “heaven-window” illuminated the god and his birds. It seemed appropriate that these tender things should brush his face daily with their velvet bodies. For Buddha loved wild life, and did more to protect it than any makers of Western game laws. So large is the image that its little finger equalled my body and mounting into its lap was like climbing a hill-slope.

Nearby was a cliff high in which were hermits' caves, some natural, some hewn. After perilous ascent through rock chimneys, we found only one toothless old monk there. He told us of the glories of the place when each cell held an acolyte studying the scriptures now stored away in niches. There were evidences that the place

had been used as a citadel by more than one armed force.

In the last city on the Shensi side was a Swedish-American mission. Remembering our experiences at Binjo we sent our baggage on over the border and then went into the city to pay a call. The missionary's little girl was very ill—acute tonsillitis and threat of pneumonia, I judged.

"I have buried three children in this far land," said the despairing mother, "must I lose this one?"

The father moved about stolidly in his Chinese clothes. "We have sent our luggage on ahead," we told him. "Despatch a horseman to overtake it and bring back our medicine kit. We will remain here and work over the child until it comes."

"But," he replied, "I have no one to despatch. And I cannot ride myself."

"Is there no one who will go for you, to save the life of your child?" asked Hayes.

"Well, I'm afraid not. But I'll ask."

His cook was afraid of bandits. His native pastor had a sermon to prepare.

"How long have you been preaching here?" asked Hayes.

"Thirteen years."

"And you have not won the heart of a single Chinese so that he will help to save your child's life!"

Hayes went into the native pastor's room. I heard him speaking persuasively. Then: "You damnable hypo-

230 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

crite! I think you need this kind of instruction!" Hayes, in a fury of indignation, was plying his quirt on the fellow's back.

The missionary clumped in. "Oh, stop, Mr.—please stop! You will break up my church!"

I thought for a moment Hayes would use the whip on him. But he walked away in disgust. "I will go to the magistrate," he called to me. "I believe he will have more heart for this man's child than his converts. If that does not succeed I will set out myself."

The magistrate's men arrived with the medicines about midnight. In the morning the child gave promise of surviving. We left drugs and pressed on, haggard for lack of sleep.

It was a relief to get into Kansu. The people seemed heartier and truer, as well as larger of stature. The strong Moslem influence there had saved them from opium.

At the border some bearded chiefs received us with a simple meal. We were provided with a mounted escort under a polite but humorously vain sergeant. He pointed out the famous medicine tree of the district. Practitioners made pills of its bark, which, if placed by them on the tongue and swallowed "unsight and unseen," would cure anything. One look, however, would destroy the efficacy.

We came presently to a loess defile completely closed—its two walls shaken together—by the earthquake. The scholarly Pastor Gjelset of the Swedish mission at Chingchow met us and escorted us over the treacherous ground.

We spent a delightful night in a home which was a true copy of a Swedish country place—set apart by a Chinese wall from the swarming city. The mission plant was his “by marriage” only—he had recently joined with the very remarkable woman who built it up, and the two were as happy and solicitous over one another as any honeymoon couple thirty years younger. They had constructed a beautiful church with a cathedral spire, which towered strangely over the Chinese roofs of the city. The quake had cracked the tower, and our host had strengthened it with immense bolts whose wrought-iron heads were fashioned into the characters, standing forth impressively: “God Is Love.”

It is impossible to make sweeping judgments of mission work in China. Its efficacy depends entirely on the individual missionary. No people on earth are as quick to get the measure of a man as the Chinese.

Mr. Gjølset referred us on to Tornvall of Pingliang, the pioneer missionary of the region, as the best authority on the earthquake situation. A slight man but little over five feet tall, with the physical strength of a Samson, wearing Chinese costume as if born to it, Tornvall rules his large flock like a patriarch and takes his proper place as a never-to-be-overlooked elder in community, prefectoral and even provincial affairs. Here, indeed, was a contrast to our acquaintance on the Shensi side of the line. And the two are supported by neighboring churches in New Jersey!

Years ago, Tornvall had felt the need for a surgeon in

232 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

western Kansu. Sending to America for a book on surgery, he had practised upon the natives until, upon the testimony of Rockefeller Institute experts, he was an expert wielder of the scalpel. Several operations, several church services, business conferences, constructional supervision, some hours at study and reading, an hour at his Swedish organ, conferences and feasts with the business men and officials of the city, and innumerable pastoral interviews, made up his usual day. Besides which he loved to hunt and ride.

Tornvall's wife was an ideal housekeeper and executive. His six daughters had returned to America and were private secretaries and stenographers in Chicago; his only son, who had never been out of China and who was educated in the British mission school in Chefoo, was with him, growing into his father's boots. . . . At the time of our visit the young man was engaged in sinking an artesian well. One hundred and twenty feet down his workmen emerged suddenly into the cavern of a subterranean stream. In its bed they picked up jade, pottery and stone carvings of the Tang dynasty.

Pingliang is the trade mart of eastern Kansu. It is a busy city but has not yet recovered from the Moslem sack of 1870. For three years its beleaguered population held out within its massive walls. By immense labor the hordes of the Prophet turned the current of a river against their foundations. Eventually the wall was undermined and fell. Thirty thousand men were massacred and as many women and girls were taken and "purified" to become

the breeders of more worshippers of Allah. Thus has the Moslem community increased in China.

We learned here to distinguish between the old Moslem destruction and the new ruin of the earthquake. The city was not hard hit by the quake, although the beautiful old pagoda, a piece of architectural lace-work, was tilted a bit. But on the mountainsides about were great gashes which marked the former places of terraced fields, or tiers of cave-homes.

It was late in the day when we left Pingliang. I had delayed the party to haggle with a grizzled half-breed Russian-Tatar over some panther, wolf and fox skins. Guards and carters fretted at the delay, and Hayes alternately stormed and got interested in my purchases. Finally I told the carters to go ahead with half the escort. My congenital bent toward last-minute diversion has caused me and those about me much annoyance, but in this instance there is reason to believe that it saved our skins.

Hanging on the wall of one of the merchants of the fur market I spied an immense hand-made Russian rifle, with a belt of soft-nosed cartridges. It was near sixty bore—a young cannon. We carried only sport guns and a tiny six-shooter, and these were in the cart. A whim urged us to purchase the thing, which we did secretly, since private trade in firearms was forbidden by drastic penalty. I carried it out of town wrapped in a wolf-skin.

The remainder of the escort waited for us at the city gate. They were very curious as to what I was carrying.

Some distance out I disclosed the gun. Immediately they held a whispered council, and one of them wheeled and without explanation dashed back into the city.

The others kept hurrying us on. "You must be at the cross-roads before dark," they said. We knew that we were in for a night journey and did not see that it mattered much whether dark overtook us on the near or far side of the "cross-roads." About sundown we entered a long, lonely defile. The soldiers, who had been riding with us, urging us on, now dropped back. We rode ahead without paying much attention. And then I glanced back to find that there was not a guard in sight!

"Something is up here!" I exclaimed. "I think we had better get off this road!" We turned back, Hayes leading and my horse Tuchun following with no need of bridle control while I held the cocked gun in both hands ready to fire at any moving object.

We struck a trail leading off to the south. Long after dark it brought us to a remote village. Fortunately there was an inn. After much talk through the barred door the "Old Stick" admitted us. All we had wherewith to make us comfortable was Denver-Jones's folding camp chair, strapped to the back of Hayes's saddle! There had been no place for it in the luggage but as we left the city Hayes weakened and took it on his horse. We used it as a pillow.

The inn-keeper kept us from freezing by building a fire underneath us in the *kang*. By rolling, we could alternately warm front, back, right side, left side.

At dawn there was a clatter at the gate. Our escort!

Why had our excellencies run away and left them? Did we not know that the road was dangerous and that if we met with violence they would be held responsible?

I poked my cannon into the back of the nearest one. "Get astride your horses," I said, "and take the road single file ahead of me. Lead us directly to our cart. If one of you steps aside or unslings his gun I'll shoot through the whole line."

In this fashion, we marched our escort as prisoners to the next military post, and turned them over to the commandant. We gathered that an agent of Sengchang Liu had followed us into Kansu, bribed our guard, and arranged an ambush for us at the "cross-roads." The crime would be laid to road bandits--there would be no clues.

XXIII

WHERE THE MOUNTAINS WALKED

(Courtesy *National Geographic Magazine*—Issue of May, 1922)

AT Wating the highway forks, one road going north to Kuyuan and the Mohammedan region along the Yellow River, the other west to Lanchowfu and Turkestan. Here we obtained our first photographs of a city ruined by the quake. Taking the road to the provincial capital (Lanchowfu), we soon ascended Six Plate Mountain. With the elevation, evidence of seismic disturbance grew less.

The summits of the range, consisting of volcanic rock protruding several thousand feet above the loess deposits, were in the heart of the earthquake belt, but were not shaken seriously. The slip apparently occurred in the rockbed underlying the hard plateau to the north and the loess to the west, and sent vibrations to the surface in varying degrees of intensity, according to the nature of the soil and the thickness of the loess blanket which acted as a cushion. The vibration was only slightly transmitted to the volcanic strata of the mountains.

As we descended the west slope we found cumulative

evidence of what can happen when the earth turns into a contortionist. Two of the hardest-hit cities were Lungteh and Tsingning (which mean respectively, "Virtuous Dragon" and—paradoxically—"Quiet Peace"). At Lungteh the public buildings of the Acropolis were twisted and thrown about fantastically, and the hill itself was torn and ragged. A lone survivor from the yamen told us that the spirit of the Dragon had rumbled in his ear, designating a safe spot, and he fled from his bed and stood there untouched while the remainder of the court was deluged with bricks.

In Tsingning the chief magistrate was found in a canvas tent over his demolished yamen. In the same city two American women missionaries were dwelling in a hovel with earthen floor and a mat-shed roof that would be scorned by well-bred live stock. Though they had been offered better quarters, the mission workers had refused to accept them, preferring to share the hardships of their people.

Djo, the magistrate, served the mission ladies and ourselves with a delightful feast under his tent. He told us that at the shock he refused to harken to the shouts of his servants to save himself but knelt in prayer to the gods to save his people; in the market place we got another version to the effect that he was too scared to get off his knees and run. He deserved some credit, it seemed, although his self-praise won Hayes's violent dislike. He had taken prompt relief measures; he organized squads for the rescue of trapped persons, sent for a missionary doctor

238 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

from Lanchow to bind up the wounds of the injured, and compelled the pawn-shops to provide clothing for the destitute.

Born among the Chinese, Hayes had the instinctive Chinese mistrust for a self-advertiser. Djo, however, had learned that Americans favor a man who can publish his own virtues, and he was out to exploit this knowledge.

I asked him what he could do over the conflicting claims of peasants whose farms had slid on top of one another. Oh, he would reapportion land among the survivors and keep whatever surplus there might be himself, to prevent quarrels over it. He ultimately became Chinese co-director in the relief.

Djo told us that in the loess area beyond, slides from the terraced hills buried or carried away villages, covering farmed valley floors with a debris of unvegetated dust, damming stream-beds and turning valleys into lakes, and accomplishing other hardly believable freaks which the natives name the "footsteps of the gods."

The Chinese, since their vernacular is devoid of a term corresponding to "landslide," have coined the expression—the only phrase they have for describing what happened—"The mountains walked" (*Shan tso-liao*).

Following the Sianfu-Lanchowfu-Turkestan highway, we ascended a small valley of steep grade directly west of Tsingning. Suddenly the highroad for a length of a quarter of a mile dropped out of sight. It had been cut as if chopped off with an axe, leaving the ranks of fifty-year old poplars and cottonwoods partly uprooted upon

the edge of the sixty-foot gully which occupied the position of the road like sentinels stricken at their post.

The roadside water-supply of a nearby village had disappeared down this same gully. Natives were carrying their water from a new lake a mile to the south, in the center of the valley.

Making my way over the rent terraces to this lake, which had been formed by the damming up of the valley stream by a two-mouthed slide from the hills on the opposite bank, I photographed what is perhaps the most explanatory illustration (facing page 240).

The short valleys in this section join one another like links in a chain. Riding to the summit of the divide which separated this from the next link, we were amazed by the panorama of a valley filled with the loess dust and clods of seven tremendous landslips which had come out of the hills on either side. This little nook in the hills some five miles long, known as the "Deng Clan Draw," had become the climax of desolation.

Mountains that moved in the night, landslides that eddied like waterfalls, crevasses that swallowed houses and camel trains, and villages that were swept away under a rising sea of loose earth, were a few of the horrors that made this one of the most appalling catastrophes in history. Hardly enough valley-floor land remained uncovered for one good kitchen garden; several peasant settlements lay buried beneath the debris; one "village of the dead," containing not a single survivor, lay in ruins. Making my way over the loose earth, often sinking

240 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

up to my knees, I found several old straw hats half-buried. Perhaps they had been caught and swirled about by the wind and ultimately deposited on top of the torrent which had overwhelmed their owners.

A lone mound of fresh earth—the grave of one of the few victims who have been excavated—stood between the ruins and a thirty-foot precipice cut by the slide which had just missed the village. From a reed stuck in the earth hung a paper strip bearing the inscription: “The Eastern Lord of the Church, if you seek and call, may save your bitterness.” The dead was Mohammedan.

The only survivors of this valley—a peasant and his two sons—were saved as if by miracle. Their farmstead, instead of being buried, was caught upon the back of one of the slides, carried half a mile down the valley to where it was diverted by two streams of earth coming from other directions and, as the result of the clashing forces, was catapulted another quarter of a mile up a small draw. With them went house, orchard and threshing-floor, and the farmer had placidly begun to till the new location to which his establishment had been so unceremoniously transported.

These persons, like all others in the slide zone, were unaware of the nature of the disaster which had overtaken them until the following morning. The earthquake, registered by the fine seismograph of the French fathers of the Sikawei Observatory at Shanghai at 8:09 P.M., December 16, occurred in Kansu between 9:30 and 10 o'clock, sun time, when all persons and animals were



"WHERE THE MOUNTAINS WALKED"

A highway carried one mile across country.

This was the most striking freak of the earthquake. A quarter mile section of an old road, with the big poplars which line it, was cut off from the highway by a landslide and carried on the back of the river of earth for nearly a mile, where it was left in an almost natural position. All this took place in a few seconds of time. The conformations and waves into which the swirling earth resolved itself are plainly seen.

By the Courtesy of the *National Geographic Magazine*.

housed. A bitter cold wind and dust storm, raging at the time, added to the blackness of the night. (The frequency of wind during earthquakes is worthy of notice.)

Survivors say that they heard a tremendous underground roar and felt the shock, which seemed to them to consist of a sickening swing to the northeast and a violent jerk back to the southwest, lasting half a minute. They made all ordinary efforts to save themselves, and between successive tremors following the main shock huddled back into the ruins of their homes to await the morning. The air was so black with dust that it was impossible to see, even with the aid of lanterns.

When day dawned they crawled out to find neighboring villages obliterated, farm lands carried away, streams blocked, and hills of earth towering above their compounds. We could find no witness who had seen the immense avalanches of earth in motion. Farmer Doo, carried two miles out of the valley of death, thought until morning dawned that he had been transported in the twinkling of an eye to another planet.

It was in this "Valley of the Dead" that the most arresting freak of the cataclysm occurred. Two sections of the ancient, well-packed highway, accompanied by the tall poplar trees which bordered it, were cut from the line of road following the side hill, swept hundreds of yards over the stream-bed, and set, intact, upon an angle on top of the heap of loess. The crows' nests in the trees were undisturbed. It took weeks to reestablish communications over such breakages—to rebuild telegraph

lines and pack down trails on which horses would not sink to their bellies and carts to their hubs.

The valley of desolation opened at its western end into a wider, more gradual valley of horseshoe shape, through which we circled to the south upon our return to Tsingning. At the junction of the valleys stands Swen Family Gap, a town of several thousand souls, in which one-tenth were killed by collapse of building and cave dwellings; and the other nine-tenths were saved by the miraculous stoppage of two bodies of earth shaken loose from the mother hill and left hanging above the village, lacking only another half-second's tremor to send them down. A third avalanche having flowed from the hills on the opposite side across the valley floor and the stream-bed, piled up in a young mountain near enough to the village to overshadow its wall. An astonished peasant who lived just outside of the wall looked out of his window in the morning to find that a high hill had moved onto the homestead, halting within a few feet of his hut.

Two strangers had put up at the inn on the evening of the disaster. In the terror and confusion that followed the earthquake, the landlord completely forgot his guests. It was not until several days later that he remembered them, and when after considerable digging their room was brought to light, both men were found alive. Stupefied by the shock, they knew nothing of what had happened and imagined that they had slept through an ordinary night. The landlord, however, in spite of remonstrances, collected room rent for the full period of their stay.

Some of the scooped-out places left by these slides were half a mile in width at the mouth, extended back into the hills for a mile, and supplied enough dirt to cover several square miles of valley floor. Some were as regular as if they had been made with a gigantic trowel, while others were as ragged as if they had been ripped out of the hills by the teeth of a dragon.

In each case the earth which came down bore the appearance of having shaken loose clod from clod and grain from grain, and then cascaded like water, forming vortices, swirls, and all the convolutions into which a torrent might shape itself. In one case the stream of earth, following a river-bed, swept under a wooden bridge and tossed it high in the air, where it swung astride a comber of earth.

One of these slides pouring down upon a village had buried every building except one inhabited by the old progenitors of the clan, a couple over seventy years old. They were saved from death only by the fact that their children, displaying a strange lack of filial piety, had sent them to live in a house on the outskirts of the village which was half-covered, but stood on the brink of the gash made by the avalanche. The death of their descendants was taken by survivors in the neighborhood as evidence that Heaven had punished the clan for its lack of filial respect.

Hay and grain were mixed with the earth over a distance of half a mile, showing how the dirt had "worked" in its descent. On the opposite side of this slide a threshing-floor carrying several stacks and an apricot orchard

had come down intact. The cattle had been so caught in the slide that limbs and heads protruded, and these had been gnawed clean by the packs of dogs which roamed the country. Ridge poles of dwellings turned to sepulchers showed above the ground.

Two slides causing the lowest of these blockades buried a village of several hundred persons, converted a shapely, high loess butte into a ragged mound, and created several miles of lake out of rich valley farms. The local authorities, realizing the danger of destructive washouts if these blockades were not opened before the late summer torrents, had, before the arrival of outside relief, made pitifully insufficient attempts to release the dammed-up waters. Their efforts, upon our recommendation, were incorporated in the work of the relief societies.

The loss of nearly two hundred thousand lives and the total destruction of hundreds of towns and cities called for reconstruction work on a staggering scale. Fifteen thousand men were employed by the United International Famine Relief Society in releasing dammed streams and thus preventing disastrous overflows. Their work and that of their brave foreign superintendent, Mr. George Andrews, who raced against time to complete the ditches before the late summer rains should put the streams entirely out of control, is a romance of adventure in itself. Undoubtedly this feat saved not only the valley cities of Kansu, but obviated a silting up of the Yellow River itself which might have changed its channel on the North China plain, repeating the disaster of the eighties which cost

two million lives and disrupted commerce for months. Viewed in this light, the Kansu relief work assumes the aspect of one of the greatest pieces of preventive engineering ever carried out by man.

A dramatic episode of the disaster was the burial of Ma the Benevolent, a famous Moslem fanatic, and 300 of his followers. They had met in conclave to proclaim a holy war. The cave in which they gathered was sealed by a terrific avalanche, while the group knelt on their prayer-mats. By some miracle, the guard at the entrance to the cave escaped with his life but all the others were buried so deeply that it was only after months of digging over an area of a mile that the Moslems uncovered the bodies of their leaders.

As three-fifths of the dead were Mohammedan, the non-Moslem Chinese claim that the earthquake was a visitation from Heaven against the followers of the Prophet. Somehow, the Mohammedans failed to deny this accusation with their usual vigor and suddenly became surprisingly humble. A leading ahung (mullah) asked me if it were true that Turkey had been wiped out by the quake! I puzzled much on the significance of this rumor. The Chinese Mohammedans have never been in sympathy with Turkey's leadership in Islam. Their traditions connect them with Arabia and that is where their ahungs go to study.

It is its effect upon the Moslems which gives the Chinese cause to rate the earthquake as a blessing; their experience of fifty years ago taught them that while

246 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

"Heaven slays its hundreds, the Moslems massacre their ten-thousands." The damage to the Mohammedan settlements was in general more severe than that suffered by the Chinese farther south.

Leaving the Tsingning area, we trekked north through the hardest shaken section of all. Here the friable loess gives away to the brittle clay-gravel-alkali bunch-grass country, which was too solid to slide, but which cracked like a porcelain dish hit with an immense weight. Cave-dwellings without exception gave way, not one mud brick remained upon another. Even city walls collapsed, as in Heh Cheng-tze (Black City) and Haicheng. Nine-tenths of the people of this district were in mourning when we arrived, and there were many new Moslem graveyards. In one cave-village of eighty inhabitants, sixty were entombed, but half were dug out alive by the remaining twenty.

In another town, Yang Loh-chwang, 80 per cent of the residents perished. The remaining townsmen lacked even the heart to bury the dead pulled out of the debris, and at the time of our visit three months later, carcasses of human and animal victims still lay rotting together in the streets.

This scene was, however, unusual. The true spirit of the Chinese, Moslem and Han alike, was better represented by the farmer whom we found harrowing his grain,—steering his mule, Kansu fashion, by the tail,—and quite ignoring the fact that a few rods above his field hung a body of water a hundred feet deep, held only by a rapidly

soaking-up dam of loose earth. Or by other peasants who were cultivating ragged pieces of terrace barely clinging to the mother hill, which looked as if the stamp of a foot would complete their separation and send them cascading down into the valley.

We found no ruined morale, no pessimism, no loss of the will to live. Those whom Heaven had taken it had taken—those whom Heaven had left carried on. With gods it was the same as men. Those which survived more or less intact were rescued from their flattened temples and set up on altars built of the wreckage. In many cases the few survivors, following instinct, endeavored to remain as near as possible to the original site of their homes, and at the foot of the slide erected hovels in which they spent the winter. Shocks were so recurrent that the survivors feared to erect structures substantial enough to do injury should they collapse. As a result, many perished of the cold during the severe winter (the altitude being from 4,000 to 6,000 feet above sea-level).

The usual heated-brick beds, or *kangs*, were not installed in the inadequate shelters for fear of repetition of the casualties which occurred when the *kangs* broke through during the quake and dropped the sleepers, mostly women, into the fires below. But in the spring the survivors emerged to begin leveling off the new land that had come down to them out of the hills. The destroyer would be made to support life.

There was a great scarcity of animals, most of them having been buried in their underground stables; and a

248 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

great surplus of land, whole families having been wiped out—with not an heir remaining. Famine refugees from the overcrowded eastern plains were homesteading the unclaimed land. Kansuities, however, consider themselves a bit superior to the lowlanders and do not receive them too kindly. Their men will wait until middle age to save up the required settlement for a “home” woman rather than take an outside woman for nothing. This prejudice, however, did not apply to the self-reliant Mongol women, many of whom had been taken by Chinese husbands, creating a mixed strain of unusual physical beauty.

We found no problem of the orphaned and widowed. A widow is a great find in Kansu, saving a man an expense of three to five hundred ounces of silver in settlement to her parents. And the country being underpopulated, children are prized, there being no discrimination against girls where the market value of spouses is so great. The women realize their value and hold their heads high. If one be offended against husband or parent, a threat at self-mutilation will usually bring him to time. He does not care to see the value of his difficultly acquired or potentially remunerative property depreciated. In fact, it seemed to me that the women were getting out of hand. We visited one ruined jail from which the earthquake had liberated a husband-killer.

Although the density of population here is not more than one-tenth that of Shantung or the East China plain, the loss of life from landslides, collapsed cave homes, and

falling buildings, together with death from exposure of the unsheltered in mid-winter, was, according to official figures 200,000, and according to our estimate not less than 150,000. This quake ranks with the greatest disasters of history. The area of serious destruction, one hundred by three hundred miles in extent, contains ten walled cities, besides numerous villages. In localized regions in this large area the strange landslides occurred.

The subterranean dragon of Chinese cosmology who, according to the northwest China tradition, waggles his tail every three hundred years, this time played havoc. Perhaps no other earthquake in scientific annals ever changed the physical geography of the affected region to the extent of the Kansu cataclysm.

Though the tremendous shaking-up occurred in December, 1920, the story has hardly yet spread beyond the narrow defiles which guard the entrance to Kansu Province. It is, perhaps, the most poorly advertised calamity that has occurred in modern times.

Kansu, the ancient buffer state between the glorious seats of the old Shensi dynasties and the Tatar and Tibetan barbarians, lies to the west of Shensi and north-west of Szechwan. It is pinched between the Ordos and southern Outer Mongolia on the north and east, and the Kokonor region of Tibet and Sinkiang province of Chinese Turkestan on the south and west.

It is a country of extreme ethnographical and religious interest, being the meeting and mixing place of Buddhist Tibetans and Mongolians, Mohammedan Chinese con-

250 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

taining a Caucasian strain, and the ordinary Chinese of the "big-church."

Had the quake disaster struck several hundred miles to the north, west, or south, the loss of life would have been negligible. It selected for destruction the agriculturally rich, terraced loess country of the southern half of the affected area, the most populous portion of the province; to the north, although this is principally uninhabited grazing land, several of the largest Mohammedan Chinese cities were leveled.

XXIV

NEAR DEATH

WE had followed a beautiful, damp gorge—walled with colored rock, filled with lush spring foliage, and abounding in wild fowl,—through the Six Plate Range to ancient Ku-yuan. Here stood a pagoda of cast bell-metal, the sections of which had been crazily displaced by the quake, and here crumbled the stately palace which once housed the *Di-tai*, personal representative of the Emperor in the far Northwest. We visited it by starlight, riding horseback over thresholds which silk-clad officials once crossed on their knees. The earthquake had left the great “Benevolent Gate” a mere skeleton, and thus we saw it, stark against a wind-swept night sky, while the guard gambled “fingers” for wine by the light of torches on the carved marble causeway at its foot.

The magistrate at Ku-yuan was our most insistent host—but his cook was abominable. We decided that only a quick get-away would save our stomachs. Fortunately, Swenson, a young Swedish-American missionary of “go-

get-em" enthusiasm, was willing on occasions to fill our engagements and eat for us.

Swenson was the sort who finds everything helpful—even an earthquake. He had been negotiating for a temple property upon which to build a western-style church, but the owners would sell only on condition that the original buildings remain untouched. The earthquake effectively flattened the buildings, so Swenson got the land free of reservation at a cheaper price, and saved the expense of demolition.

It seemed desirable to find a return route that would not lead us through Sengchang Liu's territory. We thought for a time of heading south to the headwaters of the Han River and travelling down its tortuous but beautiful thousand miles by house-boat and steam launch to Hankow on the Yangtze. But after conversations with missionaries and Moslem traders, and an invitation from the Moslem head-men at Ninghsia, we decided to detour to the north instead, along the Yellow River route.

Beyond Ku-yuan the population was overwhelmingly Moslem. We were given an escort from the black-turbaned Moslem troops. The Moslem inn-keepers we found to be cleanly, but if the Hans (as the non-Moslem Chinese call themselves) had charged us fourfold, these publicans charged us tenfold. An alkaline plateau good only for camel grazing stretched away to the Yellow River bottom. Drinking water was drawn from cisterns, which often resembled cess-pools.

The road in places was so cracked by the earthquake

that it was a great danger to the limbs of horses and men. It was safest to ride camels—their large, soft pads usually bridged the cracks.

A one-eyed Moslem trooper insisted upon challenging me and my horse to race! Away we went, mile after mile at a terrific speed, our mounts taking the contest into their own hands—or rather teeth. As we tore through a village two huge mastiff dogs locked in combat rolled out into the road. My horse cleared them by a side-wise leap; his tripped, and pony, dogs and man rolled in a struggling mass. It was half a mile further on that I got my horse stopped. The pony had recovered himself and fled, the trooper was lying unconscious. I did what I could for him, and left him at the local inn with some medicines.

At ruined "Black City" I noticed the first symptoms of the supreme dread of the traveller in Asia. Many a man in the hinterland has made this discovery and gone in to write his farewell messages home. I hesitated to tell Hayes, but he guessed. Dysentery? We had no emetine. It was three hundred miles to a doctor: sixty to the nearest telegraph station.

To move would aggravate the condition. Yet it was dangerous to tarry. Without remedies, I might reckon on three weeks to live. If I could get to a hospital within that time there was hope.

Hayes despatched a man to the telegraph line with a message to Tornvall. I lay on a brick bed in the ruined inn awaiting an answer. It came the third day:

There was a native doctor's assistant visiting his family seventy miles to the north of us who was supposed to have some emetine with him. We made two attempts to start but each time I suffered so much from the rough roads that Hayes brought me back.

The world was gradually growing indistinct to me. . . . Marvellous visions of colors and shapes . . . I had seen them once in my youth when I bled into unconsciousness—and awoke, startled to find myself alive with two hollow needles pumping salt water into my arteries. Good old Hayes was greatly troubled.

"No need to worry," I tried to assure him, "If I 'go west' don't attempt to take my body back. Just get a stone-cutter to carve the words: 'Glad did he live and gladly die,' and leave me here on the plain."

My great regret was my three little boys. I had dreamt of the time when the four of us, all young yet, would ride out together in search of adventure.

At last we left the Black City. I was swung in a hammock rigged up by Hayes under a great covered cart. Hammock and occupant were wrapped in oilskins for protection against the bitter wind, loaded with sleet and sand.

I know little of that journey. After some stages Hayes found the doctor's assistant. He said the symptoms not dysentery, but cholera. Perhaps he was right, but cholera would ordinarily have been more painful and quicker ended.

"Give him opium," said the sympathetic natives.

There was one other treatment, kill or cure, of which I had heard. During a moment of lucidity, I told Hayes. It was the kerosene-salt-water injection, half and half. Hayes scoured the locality for kerosene. This is one part of the earth where the Standard Oil Company has not penetrated. Luckily a man was discovered who had brought a quart from the east, as a curiosity. Kerosene and opium killed the germs and I survived.

My recovery was as rapid as my seizure. In a few days I was fretting to get out of the hammock. When we came within sight of Ning-an-bu, on the Yellow River, I mounted my McClellan and rode into town. We expected telegrams there, and I went direct to the office while Hayes hunted an inn.

One wire was to him from my wife. "Please bring the corpse," it read. Evidently the operators who had handled Hayes's wire to Tornvall had done some long-distance gossiping which reached her.

I wired a reply at once. "Bringing it as fast as I can." And signed my own name.

Ning-an-bu—"Repose-peace Mart"—after the bitter plateau was like the Garden of Eden. Geese, ducks and teal swarmed along the irrigation laterals, and song-birds filled the trees.

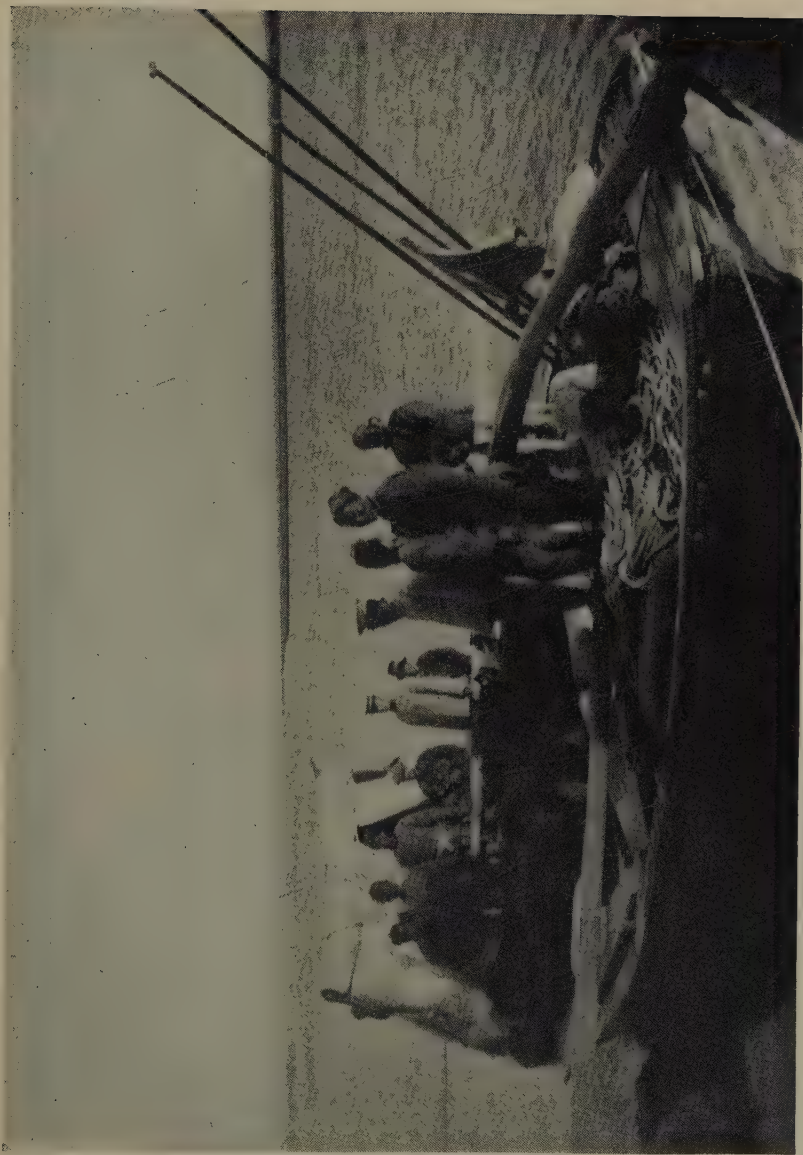
Innumerable small fortresses with crenelated walls from twelve to thirty feet high dotted the valley floor. The Moslem farmer, instead of living in a village and going out daily to work his little plot of land, resides in his own castle on his domain. Within sturdy walls of sun-baked

clay he has style according to his wealth: cattle-sheds, fodder corrals, dwelling apartments and perhaps even a harem and a private mosque in which officiates his own ahung.

Highly painted women, wearing elaborate hair-ornaments and tiny embroidered shoes showing beneath their scarlet trousers, worked in what appeared to be little vineyards. Were followers of the Prophet growing grapes? Chinese Mohammedanism is liberal, but not so loose as that. We discovered that the vines bore not grapes, but a tiny berry used throughout China as a woman's specific. And the production of it is a woman's industry, making the ladies of Ning-an the best provided with pin-money of any of the daughters of Han. Each spring several hundred thousand dollars worth of their product floats down the Yellow River in tightly lacquered crates to the medicine markets of the coast province.

The banks of the river had not thawed and the "shipping" season had not opened, but we persuaded one grizzled old boatman to calk up his scow, hire a crew of five and drift us down the river. Foolishly depending upon him to start at the time set, we rode some miles out of town to his anchorage, only to spend a frosty night in the open with our horses and luggage.

At last we had the scow loaded,—our two Moslem guards in front, four horses ("Tuchun" and "Sengchang" and two remounts which we had purchased) in the middle, and ourselves on the poop deck under a four-foot high straw-mat shelter. We had to be continually on guard to



THROUGH MONGOLIA BY SCOW BOAT

keep the boatmen from depriving us of even this as it caught the wind and made steering very difficult at times. On this craft we spent fourteen days and nights, drifting out of China proper around the Ordos kingdom of Mongolia, and southward again to the border of Shansi province.

Although not without adventure, they were the most placid two weeks that I ever spent. We had Mark Twain's "Life on the Mississippi," Bertrand Russell's "Roads to Freedom" and the "Sayings" of Confucius. For diversion we could help our faithful boy with the meals or speed up progress by manning an oar. We took potshots at geese, ducks and the great white swans which plumed themselves on the sand-bars.

One day we passed a *likin* or internal revenue station set up by some independent who was levying tribute on all traffic. A mounted man with a rifle slung over his shoulder rode down to the bank's edge as our boat drifted by, and ordered us to stop. Hayes had been much occupied in the other direction, aiming with one of our last shells at a goose which was drifting down the stream. Suddenly the bird lifted and flew directly over us. As it appeared between him and the bank Hayes let go with both barrels, unwittingly peppering the horse of the revenue collector with birdshot. The pony took out over the steppes at a breakneck pace, his rider clinging for dear life, gun flopping in the air. We were alarmed for a time at the possible consequences, but the victim's comrades went into paroxysms of laughter at his unwilling flight

258 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

and much to our relief allowed us to drift by without molestation.

Along the way we studied other craft which had taken to the river early. Most unique were the skin rafts, constructed of cow or goat hides stuffed to resemble the original shape of the animal, varnished and water-proofed with wood-oil from the Tibetan forests, and roped together with the legs sticking up. In the case of the goats the two front legs are trimmed off, but the cows keep their distinction as quadrupeds.

These rafts vary from the two skins roped together, upon which the peasant brings watermelons down to market or the drug-runner smuggles opium from bank to bank, to the great oblong craft which drifts down from the Tibetan border bearing a twenty-foot stack of loose wool with tents atop for the accommodation of passengers and crew. The craft can be made up into whatever shape is most suitable for the destined route—long and narrow for the narrow channels or short and stubby for the wider river. A large raft may, after starting out, find it expedient to split up into two each carrying half the cargo, or two may join fortunes in one large one.

This type of ship has undoubted advantages. Hides are not so easily punctured as wooden bottoms where the river-bed is rocky, and if a hide or two ships water the buoyancy of the entire craft is only slightly affected.

These must have been the original compartment boats. If it is planned that they shall bear a heavy load requiring great buoyancy the skins are stuffed with straw; in other

cases they are stuffed with grain or other cargo which lends itself to such loading. Thus above-“deck” and below-“deck” loads, if they may be so designated, can be proportioned to the highest advantage. At the end of every down journey the rafts are unroped, the hides taken out of the water, dried, patched and revarnished. Then the “boat” is loaded on camels and carried home overland.

There were frequent rapids to shoot—the swiftest at China’s Thermopylæ, where the Yellow River breaks its way out onto the Mongolian plain through a three hundred foot gorge. We saw here a most imposing monument to the Hundred and Eight Heroes, every one a general, who held the pass against the hordes of the Khan after their armies had refused to continue the hopeless resistance. Arranged in a great triangle on the steep side of the gorge, stood one hundred and eight monuments, in the shape of immense Mongol yurts. They were geometrically placed so that from whatever angle viewed one saw a straight line of these graceful “tents of the dead” leading directly toward the more ornate sepulcher of the commanding general at the apex.

On the Mongol plain, after a fearsome battle through mountain-high sand dunes, the river spread out a mile wide. Sometimes there were several channels. In places great ledges of coal, one several miles long, protruded from the bank. Here the desert winds caught us, and we made progress largely by bumping the bank, swinging end for end into the current, bumping again with the other side, and so on until animals and men alike were dizzy.

Quicksands were common. A pathetic sight was a young camel sinking slowly into the stream while its mate whined helplessly on the shore. Hayes was touched and ordered the boatmen to stop. They thought he was joking. Before we could convince them that we really wanted to interrupt progress to save that camel the current had carried us far past. Our last view of the unfortunate beast showed him with nothing but nostrils protruding, while his mate still stood faithfully on the bank, calling for help.

The camels of the Chinese-Mongolian trade, largely owned by the Moslems, are grazed on these arid steppes. For eight months they store fat in their two great humps, then for four they travel at their two-mile-an-hour pace for eighteen hours a day with no food but a little brush for toning. At the end of this period their humps lie limp as empty gunny-sacks on their backs and will no longer support the long pole pack-saddles. They are tragic beasts, unfortunate survivors of an earlier biological age, arousing no affection in contemporary animals or man. Horses hate them for their snake-like hiss and their mean habit of slinging water with their tail: men are enraged by their weird cry, like that of a crazed woman.

Our journey was enlivened by the horses, which, as likely as not in the middle of the night when a single helmsman was awake, would start a row and it would take the combined efforts of all on board to keep them from kicking our flimsy boat to pieces. Once we discovered that my "Tuchun," with his sharp young teeth,

had chewed clear through the side. We patched the boat with an oil tin.

We endeavored to land each day and take the horses off for a run. Often we would put them on a sandbar and let them race madly about to their hearts' content. One day at the north rim of the Ordos country we disembarked to hunt antelopes. I fired through the brush and very nearly hit a hidden flock of sheep and goats. The huge Mongol shepherdess came toward us protesting, surrounded by a pack of growling mastiffs, their "spines" on end like boars' and their black tongues showing between the two tusks which characterize the breed. She was in high felt boots and "rams-horn" head-dress, with long loops of red beads hanging from her ears. Her features might match those of a Sioux Indian. I apologized with profuse gesticulation. She accepted with aloof dignity.

After that we grew more friendly and she admitted what she had before denied, that she understood Chinese. We asked if she would sell us a young kid from her flock. She caught one and handed it to us. I offered her a Chinese silver dollar, at which she murmured. I produced a second dollar at which she grew positively angry. It dawned over our amazed minds that she was grumbling because we gave her too much money!

"There," we exclaimed. "We have discovered one striking difference between the Mongol and Chinese characters!"

As we left she made us a gift of a mastiff puppy which

had taken to our party. This cunning ball of fur and mischief, not yet weaned, was as big as a yearling sheep and weighed thirty pounds. We went off with the kid over Hayes's saddle and the dog over mine.

The Mongol woman had a lad with her. In the Ordos the flocks are owned and tended by the women. The men, when of age, are sent to the monasteries. When the women want them they send for them and when through with them they send them back. And yet these matriarchs choose a man as figure-head of the kingdom. Perhaps they could never agree on one of their own sex.

The glory of the little principality of Ordos, which is being slowly covered by advancing sand dunes, is that it holds the tomb of the great Jenghis Kahn. Its one excitement is the annual festival and horse races at the tomb. To attend that event come Mongols from all of central Asia.

We climbed to one of the monasteries, a fortress-like group of buildings perched high above a dried bed of the Yellow River. The lamas regarded our intrusion with hostility. To our surprise a stripling in a yellow robe came forward and welcomed us, whereupon the atmosphere changed to one of respect. It appeared that he was the "living god" of the place. He ordered the square padlock, two feet across, taken off the main hall, and showed us into an interior hung with dazzling embroidery, gold, silver and platinum work and carpeted with thick rugs in sacred designs.

"Mai-drr"—Amida, the Messiah Buddha of the future,

was done in gold-covered wood. On the walls female and animal figures mingled in grotesque and lascivious symbolism, representing the origin of life. Other paintings were of the "Western Heaven" and hell.

Our dog and the goat made things interesting aboard the scow. They were such playmates that we hadn't the heart to slaughter the latter as we had intended. The only thing he would eat was garlic, and we laid in a goodly stock of the odoriferous herb, to the great offense of our Moslems.

These battle scarred warriors spread their rugs daily when the setting sun turned the dull yellow water to gold, and prayed toward Mecca. The practical and temporizing Chinese mind has lightened the ritual of the "faithful" from five prayers to one daily. However, they were very careful about their food. Since there was no room for two sets of cooking to go on on the fore-deck, the Moslem guards cooked food enough for the boatmen as well as themselves in their consecrated pots. The former seemed well satisfied with the arrangement but I'll wager that at Paotow, their journey's end, they went in for a debauch of roast pig and garlic.

We speeded progress toward this metropolis of the Central Asian plateau by giving the boatmen judicious doles of good Kansu rye whisky. Picturesque flat-roofed Paotow will by the time this sees print have steam transportation to meet the ancient navigation on the upper River, and the produce of a newly-opened economic empire will be loaded from the backs of kneeling camels

onto steel cars. It is the gateway to one of the last considerable areas of earth to come under the lash of "Progress." Its name is new to us, yet it is the objective of a lifetime to the Mongol herder or the Moslem peasant.

"Have you been to Paotow?" the felt-clothed swain of the Upper Country longingly asks his chance acquaintance. The tone is the same as that of the country lad in Iowa, who, half-ashamed to disclose his dreams of the city, asks if one has been to Chicago.

Camel driver and toughened scowman swagger among their home fellows in a superior way after they have once been out to Paotow. They have seen the world.

The railway was hardly yet finished into Suiyuan, a hundred miles overland from Paotow, when we arrived. By this time we had added another member to our family: a graceful, delicate-limbed baby antelope. We put the mastiff pup and kid in one Standard Oil box and the antelope in another, piled them with our luggage aboard carts, bid farewell to the scow and set out for the trail of the iron horse and civilization.

The construction boss at Suiyuan gave us a ballast car into which we loaded our animals. As the four horses had never seen a railroad it can be imagined how they acted when we approached the first tunnel!

A chap in uniform crawled out from somewhere and lent timely assistance. I learned that he was a deserter from a frontier force which was discussing mutiny. He preferred to take French leave, and became my *mafoo*, or

groom, a devoted fellow but with a temperament like a prima donna.

At one of the stops along the road my Mongol pup disappeared. I suspected the railway police. The accommodating engineer held the train for two hours while we searched the barracks and the surrounding country, but to no avail.

Eventually we arrived at the station in Peking, hooked to the rear of a passenger train. Our wives and friends searched the first, second and third class coaches but passed by our outfit, which, at first glance, they thought to be under command of some long-bearded Russians. However, we convinced them of our identity, and they gave us an exuberant welcome.

XXV

THE CHIEF OF THE CHINESE MOSLEMS

BEFORE we drifted out of Kansu province into Mongolia we had stopped at Ninghsia, the citadel of the Chinese Moslems, to pay our respects to General Ma Fushiang—the acknowledged head of Islam in China since the burial of Ma the Benevolent by the earthquake. Among the Chinese Mohammedans “Chang” gives place to “Ma” (which is a syllable out of the prophet’s name) as the most common surname.

These people are an interesting cross between the Caucasian and Mongol. History has it that Mohammed, not overlooking the importance of the great Chinese empire, sent his maternal uncle, Wahb-Ali-Kabha, as a delegate to the Tang court at Sian in 628 A.D. Wahb returned by sea via Canton and there founded the first Chinese mosque, which exists to this day.

Three years later the Nestorians arrived with the Christian doctrine but were eventually either absorbed or choked out by the Moslems. In the following century the Tang emperors found that their neighbors, the Turks,

had accepted the religion of the Prophet. Tang Dai-Dzung purchased from their Caliph four thousand Arab mercenaries to assist him against the Tibetans, the price being a fair Chinese princess.

These Arabs, settled in the Upper Yellow River Valley by the emperor, founded the Moslem community in China, which accounts for the fact that all the ties, religious and sentimental, of their alleged descendants are with Arabia and not at all with Turkey. They took Chinese wives whom they proselytized and purified. Their sons were trained in loyalty to the faith and also took Chinese wives. Occasionally the Moslems broke out in Jehads against the idol-worshipping Chinese. Thus Islam grew in China.

China's successive dynasties preserved on the whole good relations with the Moslem Chiefs with the exception of the last. The Manchus ruled them out of the examinations and all part in Chinese politics and culture, and attempted to interfere in their internal religious affairs. As a result, it got on its hands two most devastating outbreaks. The Moslems furnished the fierce Kansu braves who were the terror of the besieged foreigners during Boxer days and it was their commander who sat upon the skin and ate the heart of the German minister, von Ketteler.

Having no love for the dynasty, the Moslems ardently supported the Republican revolution but when we visited them were supremely disgusted at its results. The doings of Peking's agent, the fatherly Tuchun Chang Gwang-

268 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

yuan whom we met in flight at Sian, had, in combination with the religious fanaticism of Ma the Benevolent, provoked them almost to the point of another uprising, but the earthquake came along and humbled them.

Ninghsia sets well back from the meandering river. Its port, "Flood-City," is one of the busiest marts in the world, being the collecting and reshipment point for wool, tobacco, licorice, salt and coal.

On the way to the city I nearly created a riot at a country meat-shop by taking one of its knives to slaughter two "porcelain-capped" water-shrikes which I had bagged, but which refused to die and kept digging the horse with their crow-like claws. The Mohammedans usually ran to us for the privilege of giving ceremonial slaughter to our wounded victims—thereby, it seems, achieving some sort of merit, and making the food fit for consumption by the faithful; but the shrike was an unclean fowl and my act desecrated the place.

Ninghsia stood among flowering apricot orchards, a great, flat-roofed town. Its only Chinese features were the two tall pagodas—one of them was like nothing I had seen elsewhere in China. It has twenty-four sides, created by a floor plan of a cross imposed upon a square in such a way that the four ends of the cross protrude through the sides of the rectangle. Counting the knob on top it has thirteen tiers. We climbed it by drawing our ladder after us from one story to another to the dizzy height of near three hundred feet.

On the ceiling of the topmost tier were some very dim

paintings of beautiful women—the only cultural relics in it not destroyed by the Moslems. Its history is lost, but the cross seems to lead back to Christian influence, which may likewise account for its preservation by the Chinese Mohammedans, who have very kindly feelings toward their religious cousins, the “non-idolatrous” Christians.

Here and there were mosques showing Turkish or Arabian influence, as well as structures combining in ornate beauty the Chinese and Turkish roofs, a style in which General Ma's new palace was being erected. But most typical of all was the Ninghsia Chamber of Commerce which takes the place of the Drum Tower of Chinese cities. This consists of an immense masonry arch bestriding the main street, surmounted by a tiered tower serving as feast-hall and offices. In it the Chinese love of the imposing but useless is combined with the Moslem love of the practical.

General Ma, we discovered, had just departed, leaving word that he would entertain us at his new headquarters at the Suiyuan railhead. Peking, to appease the Moslems for the fatherly Tuchun's escape from Kansu, had bestowed upon Ma a four-hundred mile length of river-valley having the natural wealth and irrigational facilities of the Nile Valley, and had brought the Chinese Mohammedan community, after centuries of isolation, into contact with the outside world through a railroad.

General Ma's nephew, an austere man who had charge of his army, and his civil administrator, who was not a Moslem but through his integrity and ability held his

post among them, entertained us. The Younger Ma startled us by proposing a temporary government for China made up of a foreign council with an American at its head; he read to us the revelations of a new boy-prophet in Shantung, called by some the "Second Confucius," which advocated the union of the Buddhist, Mohammedan, Taoist, Roman Catholic and Protestant Christian religions, under the all-embracing ægis of Confucian culture.

I had heard, on the coast, of this new "Five-Gates-One-Road" sect, with its occult "Repair-the-Spirit Gardens" where Amida, Mohammed, Lao-tzu, the Virgin Mary and St. John receive honor at contiguous shrines, and messages come to the devotee through the ouija board, but I hardly expected to find an exponent in the commander of the Moslem army in Kansu.

We left Ninghsia one evening, our hosts urging us to stay until morning and seeming put out at our Anglo-Saxon principle of proceeding according to program. Our guard was confident that he could find the way to our anchorage. Dark soon overtook us and we picked our way through the maze of irrigation ditches by the light of a scraggly moon. After we had ridden four hours our guide pointed out the dim horizon, saying: "There is the river." We spurred on only to find a stretch of sand-bar just coming under cultivation, instead of the muddy water of the river. The guard was nonplussed.

"I was all over this country six years ago and at that time the river was here," he said.

We spent the remainder of the night looking for the vagrant stream which had moved across the flat country several miles since our guide had known it. So rapidly do the banks melt away along the wide stretches where the river is only belly-deep that our boat, anchored at land-side, would often be many feet out in the stream by morning; the sounds of caving earth crashing into the water sounded like a bombardment.

At the railhead we were received by General Ma, and so heart-warming and interesting a host was he that in the months following I made frequent trips with various friends into inner Mongolia to visit him. He is handsome, direct and stately—yet affable—the aristocratic descendant of generations of chiefs. He boasts of his interest in Chinese classical learning and western engineering and science, although these things are alike innovations to the Chinese Moslem. He is as proud of his people as they are loyal to him.

“They have not enjoyed the educational and political privileges of the Han Chinese,” he said to me, “and they are in many respects primitive. But they know the meaning of fidelity and if I say ‘do this, although it means death,’ they cheerfully obey.”

I was once at his table with several friends from the American Commercial Attaché's office in Peking and a number of local guests. We had enjoyed about thirty courses of the most delicately cooked and served food I have ever eaten (his waiters cleverly took care that we did not eat too much of one thing). Rice, or food, was

272 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

the last course, all going before being politely called "relishes."

"What," exclaimed Ma, "no more? Tell the cook we require ten more courses."

"Your Greatness," was the reply, "the cook submits that he received but short notice and had not time to provide more."

"Tell the cook," Ma said calmly, "that we will either have ten more courses or the crows will have him."

There was a little delay, but we got the ten courses.

Ma did not touch wine and tobacco himself, but served them to his guests. Upon his first visit to General Wu Pei-fu, at which I happened to be the introducer, I even saw Ma eat food from unconsecrated vessels. But when he discussed his projected visit to America with the commercial attachés he insisted that he must bring with him his own cooks and pots. He asked us to plan a way whereby his men could do their own slaughtering and cooking in the trains and hotels of this country!

On one of my visits I was accompanied by "Pa" Rhea, of the attaché's office. At sixty he was as hale as his youthful confrères, who regarded him as a very devil for work. He was a pioneer American railway man and could tell you offhand how many spikes there are in the Pennsylvania railroad or what he wrote to the district engineer on March 13, 1871. His one avocation from the mental storing up of figures was golf. He had a wealth of whimsical, worldly-wise saws which he passed on with his cackling laugh to the young fellows. Rhea's passion



WU PEI-FU, THE LITTLE "GENERAL," AND MA FU-HSIANG, CHIEF OF THE
MOSLEMS, IN "MUFTI"

Snapped by the Author who introduced them.

in life was to have every possible exigency provided for.

"Where are we going to stay tonight?" he demanded from me as we set out westward.

"I don't know," I replied. "We'll see when we get there."

"How are we going to get there?"

"I don't know. We'll find that out along the way."

He exploded. "This is too damn casual for me! I am going home!"

But casualness was a great protection against the Asiatics.

On this trip we met a little band of Cossack officers—refugees from the Reds—who had made one of the cheapest journeys on record: three-thousand miles across Asia on four hundred Chinese coppers apiece, given them by the Tuchun of Turkestan. General Ma was rationing them with a sack of flour a day, but the Cossacks complained that he did not give them a cook to bake it. Some of them were ill of pneumonia. Survivors of this band were eventually drafted by Chang Tso-lin into his ammunition factory at Mukden.

Another eventful visit to General Ma's capital was that in company with Minister Crane's son, John, and Dr. Stanley K. Hornbeck, now of our State Department. We occupied the first private car ever run over the new railway to Suiyuan, and were nearly asphyxiated in a motor-car with a leaky exhaust which took us on over the steppes to Paotow.

We had a "boy" who had learned that the American's tea is coffee, and he had provided himself with several thermos bottles full of the brew. He took for granted that we drank it as the Chinese drink tea—at every possible provocation—and at each stop was on hand like a jumping-jack with his bottle and cup. Without thinking we drank. We all became sick, in the British sense of the word, and had to stop progress to relieve our stomachs.

"Why!" exclaimed Dr. Hornbeck, as he came up for air. "It's that d—— coffee!"

Just then the boy arrived with a proffered cup. I shall never forget the murderous glint in the victim's eye and the wounded expression on the boy's face as he was chased by the doctor over the prairie.

We were able to obtain at a nearby lamasery some prayer rugs decorated with the sacred Buddhist symbols. The Paotow rug is unique. Since cotton and hemp here are higher-priced than wool, there is no temptation to adulterate such as exists at Peking and Tientsin. The finest rug is made from the belly-wool of yearling goats. The weave is different from and much stronger than the Peking weave, being in squares as well as rows, and approximating more nearly the Persian style. The patterns are original, showing the Mongol influence, and are usually done in heavy reds, pure white, or deep blue.

The famous "Paotow Blue" is made in vats outside the city from the steppe grass, many tons being required to make a few hundred pounds of dye. It is more costly than the wool. The output of these rugs is very limited,



"SUNSET" UNDER THE ALTAIS

Hayes Holding a Baby Antelope.

Photo by Hall.



IN MONGOLIA

The friends from the Commercial Attaché's office, Peking, and two of the Cossack Officers who travelled 4000 miles on 400 coppers.

being destined for sacred use, and the secret of their weave is known to only a few masters and their apprentices. It was through General Ma's friendship and aid that I and my friends were enabled to get some of them out, and to America.

The sun here was scorching in the middle of the day, and the comely long-waisted China-Mongol women were taking to the open-bosom style of summer. They were friendly enough to us as they gossiped over their washings at the stream-sides, but as soon as any one produced a kodak they precipitately fled. We tried bribing them, flirting with them, sneaking up on them, diverting their attention, disguising the camera—all to no avail. Finally Dr. Hornbeck, in desperation, tried direct pursuit, following them with opened kodak to the very doors of their apartments. All he got was a roll of rear views in full retreat.

Half-way home, at Kalgan, the Inspector of the Railway Police boarded our car.

"Did your excellencies lose a Tibetan dog, some weeks ago?" he said.

"I did," I replied.

He escorted me to the guard house. In one cell was the dog, grown out of all recognition, looking like a cross between a wild boar and a grizzly bear; in another was the guard who had stolen him.

"What shall I do with them?" asked the Inspector.

"Free them both," I said, and went back to my car.

XXVI

THE POT BEGINS TO BOIL AGAIN

WU PEI-FU took advantage of his acquaintance with the Moslem General to counteract the Chang Tso-lin-Chen Shu-fan pact which he so much feared. It was agreed that in event Tuchun Chen of Sian should attack Wu in the rear, Ma's Black-turbans would make an attack from Mongolia to support him.

However, the play came out differently. Wu's Colonel, whom we had innocently taken into Tuchun Chen's citadel, made arrangements with Sengchang Liu which culminated in the invasion of Shensi by an officer of Wu's named Yen, backed up by the Christian General Feng Yu-hsiang.

Unwittingly, I had taken part in ruining Chen, whom I liked, and establishing the cherubic-faced Liu, who had sought my life!

Chen held the defiles at Tung Kwan against Yen and Feng until he was attacked in the rear not only by Liu, but by the one-eyed independent, Kwo Chien. The army was surrounded but the elusive Chen escaped with a few followers to resume his old-time profession of banditry in

the mountains of the Szechuan border. An ex-bandit governor had become an ex-governor bandit—and the Peking Christian University had lost a valuable patron.

Then Yen suddenly died of an overdose of opium—so it was announced—in the very palace in which we had been entertained, and his associate, the Christian General Feng, succeeded to power in Shensi. Feng confirmed Liu in office; but invited the one-eyed Kwo, of whom he was not so sure, to his table, fed him well and then shot him. It was not difficult for him to give reasons for executing the veteran bandit. However, Wu Pei-fu highly disapproved of this little habit of his Christian General. Just the same Feng's method proved exceedingly effective in the pacification of Shensi.

Roy Chapman Andrews, of dinosaur egg fame, had crossed my trail in Mongolia. Happening into Shensi while Feng was there he was roughly treated by the Christian General's soldiery. Mr. Andrews, accompanied by a well-known British hunter, called upon Feng in Sian to ascertain the cause. They found the somber faced, bull necked warrior living in a tent in the ancient Tang Palace grounds, refusing to use Chen's vacated yamen because of a desire to give an example of simplicity.

His soldiers were amazingly disciplined. The army was a church, of which Feng was the Methodist "Pope," the commissioned officers were the "priesthood," the non-coms the deacons, and the privates the laymen. Their day was apportioned out; so much time for Bible study, so much time for calisthenics, so much for constructive

278 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

labor, so much for the science of killing. Feng boasted that his army more than earned its own living. Smoking, drinking and gambling were strictly taboo, and Feng's soldiers were as drastic with loose women as the Ku Klux Klan.

Feng pretended to be enraged over the slaying by Mr. Andrews and his companion of a *ta-chin*, the golden haired wild ox which may be seen in the American Museum of Natural History, New York.

"What right have you to come and take the life of this rare creature in my country?" he asked, although Andrews had the permission of the Peking government to secure a specimen. He demanded that Andrews, before leaving the province, restore the animal to life! Finally he inquired regarding his guests' nationalities. "Oh, well," he softened, "you are an American, Andrews—I will forgive you. But this Britisher—I will pass him no peanuts!" And he offered the dish to Andrews alone.

Feng's real grouch was that he had not been given "face" by a request from Andrews to authorize the Shensi hunt. I gave publicity to the Andrews incident and immediately called down upon my head the maledictions of many good missionaries throughout China who had made Feng their pet. General Feng has not been, however, the only Fundamentalist Christian to make life unpleasant for the intrepid evolutionist.

Under the auspices of the Relief Committee I presented our photographs of the Kansu earthquake at the Peking Pavilion, the foreign community's only theater.

There was a demand for my quake pictures in the other foreign communities of China, and I spent the summer vacation exhibiting them, contriving to get caught in Shanghai during the muggiest months.

Shanghai, at the time of my visit, was much interested in Sun Yat-sen, who was back in power at Canton for the fourth time. He was attracting attention just then with his new commission form of municipal government. The younger men about him were doing conscientious and far sighted work, and although I felt that he would inevitably tear up his own nest I thought his latest hobby worth investigating. I went to a wharf to take ship for Canton; there I gave way to a weird "hunch" and boarded a Yangtze River vessel.

My arrival at Hankow was timely. I was able to wire my editor that there was going to be a war in the mid-Yangtze and that I was present to cover it.

Hupeh is the most important province of central China, containing the triplet of "Wuhan" cities at the confluence of the Yangtze and the Han. It had turned against the corrupt Tuchun, Wang Djan-yuan, who had milked it for four years. Although all the Chinese armies were unpaid for months, Wang's troops were in greatest arrears. They had repeatedly mutinied. Three times foreign interests had suffered heavily. Some Japanese lives were lost and Japanese, British and American consular and commercial property was destroyed.

The Hupehese invited the assistance of the Hunanese against their rulers. Sun Yat-sen, whose influence in

Hunan was strong, immediately endeavored to enlarge the affair into a general Southern invasion of the North. The whole country was thrown into apprehension. The U. S. S. *Albany* and other foreign cruisers at Hankow cleared for action, ready to protect the foreign concessions. Everyone was asking; "What will Wu do with his forces?" Posted half-way between Hankow and Peking, they were the key to the situation.

Wu's troops were already moving toward Hankow, but unaware which side they would receive orders to support. I hastened to the little general who was in his headquarters in Loyang.

"What's up your sleeve," I asked him.

"Principally, don't want any North-South war," he answered briefly. "That's a row that has got to be settled by talking, not fighting. I've been in it as much as anyone, and I know."

"But what about Wang Djan-yuan?" I asked. "Are you going to save his neck?"

"Let Wang settle that with his own people," he replied cryptically.

I went back to Hankow, and was besieged by foreign consuls, provincial officials and representatives of Wang himself to know what Wu was going to do.

"I don't know," I told the last. "But I infer that it is your move."

Wang appealed to Chang Tso-lin, who warned Wu not to attack.

"I'm not attacking Wang," was the answer, "but I

purpose to protect these cities against the mutinous gang he calls his army."

Presently the suspense got too great for Wang Djan-yuan to bear, and he left between dark and dawn on a foreign gunboat. The Chinese ability to refrain from too early a decision is a wonderful—and sometimes an effective—thing.

Wu came down from Loyang to take personal command, marking his arrival in the "Triplet Cities" (Wuchang, Hankow and Hanyang) by a discussion before the Wuhan Chamber of Commerce from the "Great Learning." The classical theme which he developed reads:

"Their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified. Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated. Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their states were rightly governed. Their states being rightly governed, the whole Kingdom was made tranquil and happy."

Wu's audience listened to him with somewhat the respect that an American crowd would give to a combined Dr. Frank Crane, John Dewey and General Pershing.

Wu called on the invading Hunanese and Szechuanese to stop. They persisted and he led out his army and crushed them with merciless strategy. He maneuvered the Hunan army into low land and cut the dykes on it, drowning out, incidentally, a number of unoffending peasants. Although extremely tender hearted with individuals, Wu, like all good generals, is ruthless in action.

282 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

The close of the campaign found him in possession of China's richest section, containing the "Hub Cities" of trade and its greatest steel mills. The hard drilling in the loess hills of Honan had brought its reward. But this did not, as his political and military enemies hoped, satisfy and occupy Wu. He confided to me an interest in wider issues than the suzerainty of the Wuhan region.

He had set his heart upon the convocation of a new national convention, such as that which sat at Philadelphia and created the American nation in 1787. He believed that such an assembly could produce as great an improvement over the Provisional Republic of 1911 as the American Convention produced over the confederation of six years earlier.

I suggested, "Chang Tso-lin is bound to be in your way."

"Yes," he admitted ruefully, "everything I am for he will be against. If he would only stay in Manchuria until we are united down here he would receive my gratitude."

In charge of Hupeh Wu placed a dependable lieutenant, Hsiao Yao-nan, a skeleton-like individual always in difficulty to sustain his oversize military trousers. Henceforth that rich province was to be his financial mainstay.

Chang Tso-lin ultimately perfected his grasp upon the Bank of Communications. To keep up with him Wu Pei-fu took a railroad—the Peking-Hankow line. And old President Hsu in Peking, whose motto was "keep all the boys happy," sanctioned both these steals.

This jockeying made everyone nervous. To add to the

tension, Li Hsun, who had been faithfully following the policy bequeathed to him by the Wall-Straddler Feng, was found dead in his palace at Nanking with a gun near his hand. A document purporting to be from his brush created a furor. It stated he was killing himself in despair over China's political troubles and advised all his brother Tuchuns to relieve their country by following his example. His death and sardonic farewell got him a heroic memory. Did he die voluntarily? Perhaps one man knows the inside story. That is Roy Anderson, the portly Chinese-born American, then adviser at the Nanking court. But some advisers are paid for telling what they know, and some for saying nothing.

Wu Ting-fang, at Canton, took advantage of the incident to spread the rumor of another restoration at Peking—which Shanghai papers accepted at face value and published to the world, naïvely assuming that the absence of mention of the coup in Peking telegrams of the date was due to censorship. For some weeks Peking correspondents were kept busy issuing denials. This proved to be the last “practical joke” of the famous old diplomat, whose wit is known at first hand to many Americans.

XXVII

THE BANDIT KING AND THE WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

WHILE the Washington Conference was in progress Chang Tso-lin arrived again in Peking. His schemes with "God of Wealth" Liang having matured, he deposed the wall-eyed Chin. And Liang, dropping his famine-relief concerns, accepted the premiership.

Liang had scarcely warmed his chair when a "circular" telegram arrived from Wu Pei-fu. The circular telegram has the same advantage as the rural telephone—everybody listens in. "The premiership is a hard and ungrateful task," suggested the Little General, "and I should much prefer to see you continue in your philanthropy. Peking, I fear, will not agree with you."

Liang overlooked the hint. Peking, he replied with profuse thanks for the general's solicitations, had welcomed him kindly, its climate was good,—he liked his job, and reckoned to stay indefinitely.

A second circular telegram came. A strong premonition and the obligations of friendship, so it read, compelled Wu to warn Premier Liang that to hold his post for even



THE GREAT WALL—AIRPLANE VIEW—WHICH DIVIDES THE REALM OF THE "BANDIT KING" CHANG TSO-LIN, FROM CHINA

Bandit King and Washington Conference 285

a fortnight might mean irreparable injury to his constitution!

Liang read this carefully, got leave of absence from President Hsu and withdrew to Tientsin. He was on leave longer than any other premier in history. In fact, he never did return and never resigned.

Chang of Mukden was mightily disconcerted. Perhaps, with a couple hundred thousand of soldiers around Peking, it would be possible to encourage a premier to stick to his job. The Manchurian hordes poured in—one hundred forty-seven trainloads, in all. Amiable fellows, well-fed, newly clothed, very loyal to Chief Chang, but ardently hoping that their advantage in numbers would save the necessity of coming to blows with the Little General.

It was time, said the "hunch," to visit Wu Pei-fu. A girl correspondent for Hearst insisted upon going along. I lent her a pair of riding breeches—ludicrously large—and bundled her into a coupé on the midnight train for Hankow.

A silk-clad Colonel of Chang Tso-lin's army entered with us. High Chinese military officers affect "mufti" except when in action. Just as the train started a shy little figure in faded yellow uniform stole into the compartment and hunched up in a corner. The Colonel appeared not to have seen him at all.

At Changsindien, where Clark and I stopped the Mukden commander's train during the Anfu War, the Manchurian officers and soldiers all left. They had been uniformly courteous and kind. As they shouted a hearty

286 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

farewell at our window we wondered whether they were destined for victory or defeat.

The Colonel gave us his card and nodded farewell. "I am taking charge of the entrenchments," he said. "Our front will be near here. When you come back—if you can't get through,—look me up."

"Do you think we will be safe in Wu's lines?" asked the girl, whose only knowledge of the Little General was gained in Mukden and Peking.

"You will find his officers perfect gentlemen," said the Colonel, bowing slightly toward the hunched up figure in the corner. That person immediately jumped to his feet and acknowledged the Colonel's departure with an up and down motion of his clasped hands—the silent expression of thanks.

When the Colonel had gone Wu's officer turned to us.

"A good fellow! We were mates in the military academy. Now he is on Chang Tso-lin's staff—I am quartermaster to Wu Pei-fu. I sneaked into Peking with some grain to carry my family through the siege which we will bring upon them. He should have arrested me, as war is imminent. But human feelings mean more than military usage."

From Changsindien to the Liuli River, twenty miles south, was "no man's land." At the Liuli "Daddy" Tsao Kun's soldiers, bearing arm bands to distinguish them from the Manchurians, boarded the train. We were, however, too sleepy to get out and look in the darkness for the trenches which we understood crossed the

Bandit King and Washington Conference 287

railroad track just south of the bridge. We slept fitfully, the quartermaster squeezing into a corner and insisting that I lie down upon his seat.

To allow the passage of military trains, ours was side-tracked repeatedly. Steel cars, upon which soldiers in disarrayed uniform brewed tea over tiny bonfires, passed us weirdly in the dark. We drew into Paotingfu as the first intimations of dawn appeared. There was excitement among the passengers at the announcement that the train would go no farther south. Some refused to budge, but the majority piled out and began searching the railway yards for a relay train which they were told had been prepared to take them on to Chengchow.

A wire brought the news that the railway had been cut just behind our train at Changsindien. The "hunch" had been accurate. The girl and I had come on the last train out.

We rickshawed through Paotingfu's muddy streets. Muck from madly-rushing military Fords deluged us. Finally we reached the house of Mr. Robert W. Clack, popular Y. M. C. A. man, introducer of athletics, and expert on local Chinese affairs, who had been through the Anfu campaign. The tree-shaded, grass-covered yard, the huge wisteria arbor in full bloom, seemed to promise a haven. Mr. Clack and his charming wife soon appeared and within a short time we were washed, fed and rested. Many times, in the nightmare weeks to follow, was their hospitality a life-saver.

Information came that a train would be leaving for the

south about 4 P.M. Mr. Clack offered to assist in getting that most difficult thing to obtain in China, a spur-of-the-moment interview, in the yamen of the old "Super-tuchun" Tsao Kun. There was no time for preliminaries. We went to the yamen and walked straight into the gate house. There was hardly an officer, non-com or private in the region who did not know Clack and proudly claim him as a personal friend. The porters were, however, astounded at our proposal to see the *Da-Swai* or "Great General" without preliminary arrangement. For a time it appeared that even Clack would be unable to persuade the men to carry our unusual request into the yamen. After being told that Wu Pei-fu was an old acquaintance of mine, they consented to take the matter up with at least the Number One gatekeeper. Progress was rapid from here on. One of the old General's adjutants soon appeared, and reassured by the sight of Mr. Clack, offered to make known our desires to the Chief of Staff.

General Hsiung Bing-Chi, Chief-of-Staff, received us in the large hall. An immense military map stuck with pins bearing miniature red and white flags plainly showed the positions of the opposing forces. We stole furtive glances at it and, by comparing observations in English, contrived to compile quite a little information but we dared not take too open an interest.

"The Old General," said this handsome General Hsiung, "has a headache all the time these days. He asks me to receive you in his place. An interview with me will be an interview with him and my words will be his words."

Bandit King and Washington Conference 289

Old Tsao sent us each a photograph of himself but we were glad that General Hsiung did the talking. Undoubtedly he gave out more ideas in the name of his chief that day than have ever furrowed the old man's gray matter. As his conversation proceeded it became plain that Wu Pei-fu was supreme in the moral leadership of the Chihli party and that there was no question as to the position of Paotingfu in the struggle. A spirit of confidence in Wu existed among Tsao Kun's "boys," as the old Tuchun fondly calls the young men whom he has "reared" and who now run his affairs. The secret of his staying power (he has outlasted all others of Yuan Shih-kai's disciples and attained to the Presidency of the Republic) rests in his ability to be satisfied with wealth and honor and leave the wielding of power to the young men whose affection he has secured to himself.

Old President Hsu's hopes of mediation, Hsiung assured us, were futile as long as Chang interfered south of the wall. The "Obstacle" to China's reunification had chosen to place itself where it was most obnoxious. (We were amused upon recalling Chang Tso-lin's and Sun Yat-sen's use of the identical word "obstacle" to mean Wu Pei-fu.) Not content with this, the Obstacle had sought to import other obstacles from abroad. General Hsiung's veiled language referred to the alleged understanding between Chang of Mukden and Japan, whereby that power in return for assisting to establish him in Shantung would be left in perpetual control of the Tsingtao-Tsinan railway. We obtained fuller details regarding this when we

290 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

saw Wu Pei-fu, who spoke as directly as Hsiung spoke mystically.

The chief of staff told us that no more trains would be allowed to go through to Peking since Chang was seizing the cars on arrival there.

We went from the yamen directly aboard the south-bound train, crowding into a second class compartment with a party of Hunanese. One was a foreign educated official of the Ministry of Communications who had been to fetch his bride and was now endeavoring to get back to his post in Peking. This couple, blocked within fifty miles of their destination, made a detour of 2,200 miles back to Hankow then via river-boat and coasting vessel to Tientsin where I met them later. They had arrived just in time to again be cut off from Peking by Wu Pei-fu's pursuit of the Fengtien army down the railway from Tientsin! Not all the travellers were as cheerful as this couple. One bony old scholar sat and grumbled that good Hunanese, who were neither concerned nor interested in this "Northern row," should have to suffer discomforts from it.

As we were pulling slowly out of a station in the night I felt a slight bump. The train stopped. A peasant minus a foot was picked up on the rails by the station police. He was accused of having sacrificed his foot to escape the coolie draft. We were held up while an argument went on between those officers who wished to make an example of him and those who held that he had received enough punishment already. In the course of discussion the

victim, who held a tourniquet over the bleeding stub, sat up and took an active part. The foot was no good anyhow, he submitted, being frequently laid up with rheumatism, and in losing it he had robbed the Chihli army of nothing of value. Ultimately he was turned over to the local first aid station and we resumed our journey. A little further on I was awakened by a snappy roll-call held by the commanding officer on a flat car standing alongside my van. As we moved on the officer was yelling loudly for some buck who was A. W. O. L.

In the morning I made my toilette with the ever present steamed towel, and joined a group of young officers en route to Loyang to receive instructions from the "Little Commander." Their journey from the mushroom junction of Chengchow to General Wu's headquarters was cheered by a group of sing-song girls, who travel anywhere in China without other pass than their long thick braids.

At Loyang I called up General Wu from his transportation office in the station and asked when he would see us.

"When you come out," was the reply.

We found the General in his living quarters at one corner of the barracks. Here, in a simple drawing room, relieved by a few well-carved pieces of blackwood furniture and artistically chosen paintings, he sat and talked as informally as any host to after-dinner guests. He bore an unassailable air of confidence and mastery of the situation, which was reflected throughout household, staff and army. He was well-named *Pei-fu*—"Trust-Confidence."

292 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

The General's wife and sister-in-law passed in and out, and his brother's two little sons, whom, having no children, he had adopted, played quietly in the far end of the room. To make company for the girl correspondent, he sent for Madam Liu, the French wife of his artillery expert. Colonel Liu had studied for six years in Soissons, France, and brought back to China this unassuming and gracious French woman, who lived—the only non-Chinese in the camp—bound up in her husband and little boy. She seemed cheerful enough but in poor health. The General was much interested in the work of the girl correspondent.

"When our women become as enterprising as you," he said to her, "China's troubles will be over—or perhaps just begun," he added, in a different tone for my benefit.

We talked about the Washington Conference.

"America," commented Wu, "has always truly intended to befriend us. But sometimes her intentions turn out disappointingly."

"Was there any truth," I asked, "in the report of a traitorous agreement between Chang Tso-lin and the Japanese over Shantung?"

His genial manner changed to indignation. "I have reason to believe," he said, "that in pursuance of such an agreement Chang's Premier Liang sent instructions to our delegates at Washington to give Japan the Shantung Railway, just when Mr. Hughes and Lord Balfour were endeavoring to get Japan to disgorge. That is why I

Bandit King and Washington Conference 293

forced Liang out. Now Chang comes with arms. You have joined me just in time!"

"Time for what, General?" I asked.

"Tomorrow I am going north to start the war. Would you and your friend like to go along?"

Chinese custom requires an invitation to be repeated thrice but we accepted this one the first time.

XXVIII

BLAME IT ON THE STANDARD OIL

GENERAL WU motored us to the siding and sent us back to town in an improvised "parlor car." It consisted of a freight car fitted with a rug and two upholstered chairs, lighted with a smoking lantern. Early the next morning we returned to the barracks. This time the girl correspondent chose a Peking cart. She probably will never do so again. We had almost arrived when a particularly violent jog tossed her against the top of the vehicle with a dazing blow. She dismounted at headquarters still somewhat unsteady. The Number One Adjutant, who is very much of a lady's man, was greatly concerned and with difficulty was restrained from summoning the Surgeon-general from Base Hospital.

The camp bustled with the activities of entraining. We were nearly starved when an officer suggested some "heart cheer," which turned out to be six hard-boiled eggs apiece. Tea, fortunately, was always very plentiful.

At four o'clock the long train had been outfitted with the offices of thirty staff men in charge of the various departments of field activity and supply. The Little



"UPTON CLOSE" AND GENERAL WU PEI-FU'S ADJUTANTS, JUST BEFORE DEPARTURE FROM LOYANG
TO "START THE WAR"

General transferred from flivver to train in the presence of his stiffly saluting bodyguard.

A comic-opera band, copied from the West, in long, blue swallow-tail coats with huge golden epaulets, struck up a fanfare composed of the "Marseillaise" and "God Be with You till We Meet again."

We were off—and so was the war.

Surprise is one of Wu's pet weapons. Up to the day before his departure, no one supposed, not even his staff, that he would leave Loyang before the arrival of the Christian Division which had been summoned from Shensi. The passage of his train was a complete surprise to the military and civilian population along the way, who had been furthering rumors to the effect that General Wu had gone to every conceivable place in every imaginable manner. A foreign railway official told me in all sincerity that Wu had left Loyang a few days previously in the disguise of a beggar.

Wu sent for me. I found him sitting in the magnificent private car originally built for the old Empress Dowager by the Pullman Company of Chicago and decorated by a French artist. The little General, between sips of tea, was dictating despatches in the peculiar, rapid dialect of the north shore of Shantung, in which all consonants are hard. As he finished he remarked to his amanuensis:

"Our pronunciations don't jibe. Either you will have to learn mine or I will have to learn yours. If I learn yours there is no reward you can give me. If you learn mine maybe I can reward you." The hint was enough.

He turned to me. "What is all this about?" he asked, indicating the walls done in friezes of Venus and Adonis. It was very difficult to explain in Chinese. Wu dismissed my attempt with a gesture.

"Perhaps you would like to see my declarations," he said. One was to the Peking Ministers Plenipotentiary, Hankow and Shanghai Consuls-general, the foreign press and all foreign nationals in China. It contained a justification of action against the "unreformed bandit Chang Tso-lin" and an earnest request to foreigners not to prolong the struggle by giving aid or comfort to the "betrayers of the Chinese people." A second was to the President, people's representatives, gentry, scholars, peasants, merchants, artisans and soldiers of China apologizing for plunging them into the horrors of internal strife, but assuring them that only drastic means could save their country from a renewal of Anfu days. He said that this war would be very short.

The third telegram was to Chang Tso-lin himself. Even under such stress of feeling there was no departure from polite language.

"In view of my respect for your effulgent ancestors," it began, "and the long affection between us, it is only with tearful eyes and bleeding heart that I resign myself to the command of heaven to sally forth and eliminate you from under heaven. Make ready—I am coming."

Chang would see beneath the further courteous phrases, reminders of his ambiguous origin, his brigand career, his protection of "leeches who had sucked their country's

blood," his "inordinate and impossible ambitions." Wu was having his revenge for Chang's insult of August, 1920, when the Mukden chief, calmly appropriating the fruits of Wu's victory over the Anfus, snapped his fingers at the "subordinate military officer."

To these telegrams were appended the names of eight Tuchuns of the Central China region. Wu signed for them but they were in no position to object. Daddy Tsao's name was conspicuously absent. He was following his old line of playing safe, letting the young fellows take the risks. He was excused upon the ground that, since his daughter was married to King Chang's son, for him to openly declare war on Chang would be a heinous breach of family etiquette. So he remained discreetly in his palace and complained that his head ached.

"We're off to put some backbone into the old man at Paoting," remarked the Number One Adjutant, winking at me. "He'll buck up considerably when the Little General arrives."

Chaperoning the girl correspondent was becoming more and more of a problem. The handsome Number One Adjutant was visibly infatuated. The only other women on board were Madam Wu and her sister, who occupied a humble coupé in the car to the rear of the General's. I called upon the Madam, who is a bluff, substantial, large-footed woman of Manchuria, the Little General's own choice. The wife chosen for him by his parents was said to have been an opium addict, and he never lived with her. Since her death, the Manchurian Madam Wu

has been the only wife of the Little General. If I judge her aright, she is the only wife he will have as long as he has her.

She kindly agreed to take the girl correspondent under her wing. Upon our arrival at Paoting the American girl, conspicuous for her fair hair, rode beside Madam Wu through the commenting crowds to become house-guest at the General's Paoting home. I was left free to accept his invitation to go along to "lay out the front."

After a visit with Daddy Tsao, who insisted upon lending his ornate "foreign" mansion, "Broad Gardens," for a base, we proceeded to the Liuli River, sixty miles north of Paoting. Tsao's forces were encamped in pup-tents quartered on the villages of the south bank. The Manchurians were entrenched in force upon a long ridge just south of Changsindien, but their advance posts could plainly be seen among the grave mounds across the river where Wu's cross-fire had discomfited the Anfu army two years before. In a road-side teahouse Wu called a conference of commanders.

With a pencil he rapidly sketched to them the positions they were to occupy, while his Chief of Staff confirmed these oral orders with rapidly written documents, duly stamped with great ivory seals dipped in pig's-blood paste.

"You will have about forty thousand men here on a front of forty miles," said the Little General, in his decisive, high-pitched voice. The Brigadiers and Colonels sat on their haunches about his table, drinking tea. "Spice-of-the-Forest has twice as many. He will need

them! The front reaches from here to the sea, but the scene of action is going to be here, with the possible exception of the Shantung border south of Tientsin, where I have put my own crack Fourth Division. But this, the decisive sector, I am trusting to you, the Old General's men. You have fought under me before.

"Now, get into your trenches. Keep your heads cool and your livers warm. Don't start an engagement unless I give the word. There is considerable prospect of this war's being won without fighting—many over the river there are looking for a dignified way to come down from the stage."

He was interrupted by a pompous colonel who rose to his feet and began beating his chest. "Let me at 'em," he began. "My brigade can clean 'em up single-handed. My boys are aching for action and I told them they could start to-night——"

"The Old Ox is bellowing again," laughed his brother officers. The speaker was Colonel *Niu*—"Ox."

"Niu," said Wu not unkindly, "you are a good soldier. But don't stampede the camp. Sit down and listen to orders or you may get into grief. Now, men, let the enemy see that you are ready. But remember, I said *don't start anything*. And if something breaks out, I shall suspect you, because I know they haven't the liver to begin!"

So saying, the General returned to Paotingfu.

At four o'clock next morning, word came to headquarters that an engagement had broken out all along the

300 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

line. Wu rushed back to the front. At the far end of the bridgehead he found Niu exultantly directing a furious attack upon the enemy's outpost.

"See," said the "Old Ox," "we've got the bridge! I'll make these Redbeards pine for their sorghum-fields!"

"You fool!" exclaimed Wu, "get your men out of here before Chang's gunners open up on them from the ridge!"

"Now," he said to Niu after they had reached the cover of the trenches, "tell me how this started!"

"Well," gestured the Old Ox, "some of the boys wanted to find out if the Redbeards were as scary as they had heard. I told them your orders were not to shoot. So they took some Standard Oil tins and sneaked over towards the enemy's post, where they played a tattoo like machine gun fire. The dupes got frightened and fired on me. What could I do but reply?"

The war was on. One more thing for John D. to answer for.

XXIX

LIFE ON A CHINESE FRONT

“SINCE you fellows are so anxious for fight,” said Wu, “I’ll give you your fill of it! Had you contained your liver” (the liver is the seat of the fluid of the gods) “for a few days until my strategy is complete, you need not have suffered a casualty. Now, scorch yourselves at the Redbeards’ fire!”

At daybreak he issued an ‘order to| advance, which was sent from his car by field telegraph to the forces along some forty miles of front.

The railroad was burdened with troop and supply trains. At the busiest moment an aged military man of dynastic-day fame came from his place of retirement on a visit of commendation to his young fellow-soldier—then forty-eight. All military trains were sidetracked to allow comfortable passage to the Ancient General. His return afforded me a convenient way to get back to Paoting and make arrangements for the transference of my despatches at that point from Wu’s military wires to the commercial telegraphs—also to get some good goat’s-milk ice cream and other “white man’s food” at the kindly Clack’s.

I made my way back to the front in less comfortable style—a large part of the way sitting on the steel floor of a box-car with the French-trained artillery expert. Each time we were sidetracked the petty officers got out and, with much language, tried to impress the railway men with the importance of our train's being sent on immediately. The colonel and majors sat dourly and waited for results, which usually came in three or four hours. During one of these stops an aged itinerant pedlar hobbled up to the car, holding his carrying pole and baskets over his shoulder with one hand and clasping his groin with the other.

"Who is *dang chia*—running this show?" he demanded.

"What do you want?" asked a non-com, stepping between him and the colonel.

The old man eyed us reprovingly. "Seems to me like, when you want to have a war, you would give the 'old hundred surnames'" (the people) "fair notice, so they could get out of your way. Here, unawares, I find myself in a battlefield and get shot," exhibiting his wound.

The soldiers laughed at the old man, patted him on the back, bound up his wound, gave him a few coppers each out of their own limited belts and sent him on his way.

The army had moved forward sixteen miles during my brief absence, and was now holding the Manchurian forces within their fortified lines on Changsindien ridge. We drew up among hundreds of headquarters cars which stood on temporary sidings in the shadow of the Sung dynasty pagoda—a famous landmark to the southeast of Peking. The colonel of artillery wished to report to Wu



WU PEI-FU'S TROOPS ADVANCING TO THE ATTACK DURING THE CHANG-WU WAR

Staff Photo.

at once, and I carried some important news for him. We found his car at last, but it was vacant save for an adjutant who pointed vaguely with his nose and chin, assuring us that the Generalissimo was "on the front."

We footed it up the railway. Before long we found it advisable, because of bursting shrapnel, to walk behind, rather than on, the embankment, and occasionally the ditch was more comfortable than either. Injured men straggled past, pausing to salute and show us their wounds. Those who could not walk—and a man had to be very completely crippled indeed to be placed in that class—were carried in on unhinged doors or more often clinging to the neck of one comrade and supported about the waist by a second. Apparently Wu's hospital service was short of stretchers.

After five miles of walk, and much inquiring, we found our General, surrounded by his staff. He was strutting about the shaded court of a farmhouse directing the fire of several field guns.

"Those Redbeards don't practise calisthenics," he said, "but they are not bad acrobats under a little stimulant. Now watch!"

The setting sun shone into the trenches of the enemy on the ridge and we could make out moving figures with the naked eye.

"Fire!" said Wu.

A few seconds later our shrapnel shells fell into their front trench. Men clambered out, scampered up the hill, and tumbled into the second trench.

"They will not get the range before dark," said Wu to the artilleryman, "but see that you move these guns before morning!"

Just then an angular old woman in pantaloons hobbled out of the farmhouse with a child in her arms.

"The idea of your planting those guns in our courtyard!" she shrilled. "What if the Little Master, here, should get killed? Would you be guilty of cutting off the ancestral line? I am sure that your glorious commander—what is his name?—Big Man Wu, would never approve of such doings. Fie on you, endangering an infant and his helpless old nurse!"

"Were not the 'hundred surnames' removed from this area?" Wu asked an adjutant.

"They were, Your Greatness. She must have hidden here with the child."

The Generalissimo turned to the old amah and stopped her torrent of language with an upraised hand. "I am 'Big Man Wu' himself," he told her, "and I will take care of you."

"It would be risky to take her out before dark," he said to his men. "Get some picks and shovels and dig a cellar. The Redbeards might drop shrapnel in here at any moment."

A few minutes later the old woman's scolding had changed into contented mumblings as she crouched with the lad in a narrow hole roofed with sorghum stalks and a thick pad of earth. It was none too soon. An accidentally-aimed shell dropped squarely in the center of the

court! A soldier picked it up and heaved it over the mud wall. The timing apparatus did not work, however, and I retrieved it for a souvenir.

On the way back to the sidings one of the adjutants insisted that I take his horse and ride with General Wu. The stars which seem nowhere so brilliant as in Chinese skies came out. The Little General rode slowly, pointing out the constellations, and trading with me their Chinese names for those we give them. The Milky Way is the "River of Heaven." The Pleiades were "The Seven Brothers." He was quite amused at our designation of the "Big Dipper." He had forgotten that he was running a war when searchlights from the ridge swept over us. Wu straightened up.

"Pretty foreign toys!" he remarked. "We'll see what they look like in a few days. Chang is buying lots of things to leave to us."

"How long," I ventured, "before you will have that ridge?"

"Six to eight days," he replied. "You may send that out. But I have a good joke you may not tell yet. By the way," turning to one of his men, "has our wireless arrived?"

"It's being set up in the top of the pagoda now, Your Greatness," was the reply.

"Chang does not know we have wireless," said Wu. "Send out a message purporting to be from his Tientsin station announcing great distress there and calling for help. When his own station comes in with optimistic

reports, send out a further statement accusing Peking of faking these messages for the purpose of keeping the suffering men in the field. You have their code?"

"Have got, Your Greatness."

I bunked with Chang Fang-yen, the bean-pole-like chief tactician dubbed about camp "the Professor." I was shivering from cold when the sleeping car porter, who had remained faithfully with his charge since its requisition, slipped a blanket over me—much to my surprise as he had sworn that the car contained no more.

"I wouldn't let those mud-turtles have it!" he said in English between his teeth. "Bah, only sons of pigs become soldiers. Look how they have mussed up my car!"

I fished in my jeans for a tip.

"Thank you, Master," he said. "I have made beds for these flea-bitten swine for a week, and all they offer me is a cup of tea."

At dawn Wu made for the trenches without stopping for breakfast. The Staff straggled out after him, buttoning up their uniforms as they went. I managed to obtain a handful of "fire-bakers," brought to the front in coal cars and shovelled off in piles along the track for the soldiers. A little further along I bought some tea, pot and all, from a ragged, barefoot peasant boy who had given up farming for this catering business.

These temporary pedlars, with tea, cakes, cigarettes and notions, swarmed over the scene of action—even up to the front trenches. Occasional casualties did not discourage them and it would have taken more police than there were

soldiers to keep them out of the lines. They got most of the four dollar bonus which Daddy Tsao gave his troops upon their entrance into action.

On the strength of this breakfast I followed the Little General through dusty grain fields and down muddy trenches. Wu walked on the very top of the embankment, a lone figure exposed to all the fire of the enemy, while we crouched against the near wall of the shallow ditches. Bullets sang over our heads and buried themselves in the opposite bank. Our expostulations availed nothing.

"If one is marked for me," said Wu briefly, "it will get me down there. If you don't feel that way about it, stay below."

We did.

As we approached one sector a squad of men crawled out of the front trench and started back. "Here!" cried Wu, drawing his automatic and cutting off their retreat, "where are you going?"

"Home," said a young non-com dazedly. "We can't fight without ammunition."

"You are going back to your trench," said Wu firmly. "Here, sergeant, is the General's own pistol and a case of reloads." He turned to his bodyguards. "Strip off your ammunition belts and give them to these men. Now, don't waste it," he called as they made their way forward once more. "If you start to retreat again without orders I'll have to shoot you!"

Some enemy gunner observed our party of sixty or

more men moving about behind the lines and began to worry us with shell fire. As we entered a village whining shrapnel fell in our midst and we scattered for refuge behind mud walls. General Wu's Number One Orderly and I found ourselves cut off from the party. After several futile attempts to overtake them we started back for the sidings. The Mukden gunner followed our progress. He must have had great sport chasing us from cover to cover. At least, we were costing him a lot of expensive ammunition.

About mid-afternoon we reached the pagoda, dead tired, and went into the General's car to rest. I awakened from my nap, sat up and looked out of the window to see cavalry skirting cautiously around us to the left. I levelled a pair of field glasses. They wore the red arm-bands of the Manchurians!

It was some minutes before I could get the chief orderly awake. We rushed about among the hundreds of cars trying to find some officer in charge. There seemed to be not a soul at base except ourselves and the first-aid contingent.

The Redbeard cavalry was getting bolder. Soon they headed directly toward us. It would be most ignominious to be taken captive at our base—in the General's own car!

We were desperately seeking some expedient when a train pulled in bringing a small contingent of artillery with light field guns. The Number One Orderly and myself climbed aboard and took command.

In three minutes we had six or eight guns down the

gangplanks and lined up along the railroad. "Now!" I said.

The enemy was by that time not more than a quarter of a mile distant. The gunners had no time to take aim, and I doubt if they hit anything. But we made such a noise and kicked up such a dust that the cavalry turned and fled precipitately.

An hour later General Wu strode in. Breathlessly we related the story of the narrow escape of his car. He seemed not greatly impressed. ". . . A foolhardy company of cavalry that broke through our lines," he said. "We closed the gap at once and they are riding around somewhere to the west there now, with no possible chance of getting back. Had they taken you we would have recovered you, and I guess there was little likelihood of their carrying off the car."

The Number One Orderly went for a pot of tea. I got back to my typewriter in the vestibule.

So life went on for four days. During that time we had two meals. There being nothing else pressing, the General decided we would eat. He ordered the cooks to bring on food, which they did to the extent of thirty to forty courses: all the conventional dishes served in the most conventional manner. As the foreign guest, I was invited to sit with the General. He ate for several hours with scarcely a pause—I kept up as long as possible.

A day or so later I mentioned to the thin chief tactician the desirability of nourishment. He sympathized, but made it plain that it was improper to intrude the subject

or have a table set on the car unless the General ate. Wu's kindly brother, "Elder Number Three," took in my plight on a visit to the front, and sent me an occasional gift of boiled meat. I ate several tins of animal crackers left as a present for the General by the ancient visiting general. And, of course, there were always the railside heaps of "fire-bakers" as the resort of desperation.

A quartermaster from the navy at Shanghai arrived with a message from Admiral Sah Jen-ping (who bears a British knighthood) to the effect that his flotilla was sailing for the Manchurian coast to take Chang Spice-of-the-Forest in the rear. Wu did not know what to do with the quartermaster; on his claim to know English the General assigned him to me as "adjutant." The quartermaster worried me to exasperation with his persistent efforts to use me as an English tutor. At night he hogged all my blanket. When Peking fell into our hands I was glad to assist in getting him installed as supervisor at one of the telephone centrals.

Because of my rather "loud" plaid overcoat, cut in a full cape-like effect, which resembled a garment worn a good deal by professional entertainers, I was dubbed "the Sing-song Girl." Much good-natured chaffing went on between the officers. Even the "Professor" gave way at times to light talk, but the General never. Occasionally he laughed heartily, as at some prisoners who endeavored to convince him that they had not been captured, but that, affected by his high ideals, they had "come over."

One thing was noticeable among such a group of Chi-

nese: There was almost no talk of women. The Oriental does not make play or conversation of his appetites. He takes them naturally, and for granted.

I thought that I was the only Occidental in the camp. Then, one evening, as I tramped between the sidings, weary to death, I came upon old Peretti, ordering a group of fully-armed soldiers off an engine tender at the point of a half-inch shillalah.

He was as delighted to see a white face as I. (As I think of it now, we were both darker than Chinese—I from tan and he from his Mediterranean ancestry.)

"These fellows have to be dealt with firmly," he said, "or we would never keep the road open at all. . . . Have you had dinner?"

"No," I answered, "nor tea, nor tiffin, nor breakfast, nor dinner yesterday."

He hustled me into his private car—a road superintendent's wagon with table, bunk and kitchenette. In French, English and Chinese he dined and wined me—he had the most complete assortment of liquors I have ever seen on wheels.

The able and sleepless supervision of this old Corsican and several fellows kept Wu's rail communications from becoming hopelessly jammed. They had been taken over from the railroad by the General's transport officer on the promise of a thousand dollars bonus in the event of victory.

I took Peretti to the General's car and introduced him to "my" gang. The nearest they could get to his name was "B'landee"—which is "brandy" in Chinese.

312 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

The next day our little foreign community on the front was increased to three by the arrival of a lank priest of the Church of England. Reverend Scott came daily to the sidings to get all the news but went to a nearby village at night. He pretended to be on his way to Peking and held up by this "annoying war." I suspect that curiosity rather than necessity took him over that route.

XXX

THE CHRISTIANS TAKE A HAND

UNTRAINED troops from the central provinces poured in by thousands. Wu seemed particularly pleased at the arrival of the Honan divisions, for their Tuchun, a "star-worshipper," was not regarded as reliable. They were composed largely of boys from fourteen to eighteen years old.

Out of thirty thousand men in action on this sector probably one third were casualties between April 30 and May 3, when Chang's line broke.

The wounded were hastily bandaged in tents pitched along the railroad sidings and laid out in rows upon the floors of box cars. Only a thin covering of grass relieved the jolts of the sixty-mile haul to Paoting, which consumed from twelve to twenty hours. The wonder is that upon arrival so few went to the morgue and so many to the hospitals.

The animal hospital was established in a slate quarry in the hill which supported the pagoda. Wounded horses were usually shot but mules and burros were recondi-

tioned for service. Their sufferings were often more moving than those of the men.

I thought I was inured to gruesome sights, but when I saw a soldier coming in carrying his bowels in his arms my stomach turned.

The Chinese will wince more over a vaccination than over the amputation of an arm without anesthetic. They have no fear of death and they do not complain, yet they make poor fighters. The settling of differences by organized killing strikes the Chinese, from commanders to privates, as primitive, wasteful, inconclusive and altogether stupid. And so the Chinese no sooner finds himself in a war than a sense of its silliness overwhelms him and he begins to cast about for some more gentlemanly and mature way of settling the difficulty. His war peters out into a talk-fest—much to the disgust of his Christian friends who wish to show him how to conduct a “real scrap.”

The apparent resignation with which the western nations are drifting into a new attempt at mutual destruction through scientific slaughter, does not brand us as civilized in Chinese eyes. Our talk of “principle,” “patriotism,” and “courage” appears to them as cant to cover a primitive lust for blood and conquest which occidental civilization has failed to eliminate.

Unidealistic, opportunistic—even sordid and craven—the Chinese may appear to us; but their “common sense” is too strong for them to sacrifice existence or culture for any principle or exhibition of sublime heroics. Their rule of life is not “fighting through,” but compromising.

This gift, which the West scorns, has made the Chinese an eternal people.

It is an old argument: To live fast or to live long?

"Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay," said Tennyson. Yet Europe today isn't so good. Tennyson would probably have preferred China, if he had really known it.

The push of the "Christian" nations upon China—politically, commercially, economically and culturally—may compel her to take up Western philosophy and weapons to defend herself, as it did Japan. Only thus will the "Yellow Peril" be born. As long as China, the "Backbone of Asia," remains true to herself, the yellow man can be no menace. Our greatest insurance against danger from this quarter lies in our protection and encouragement of the unaggressive features of Chinese culture.

The fallacy of those who depict the "Yellow Peril" is this: having good heads for arithmetic but little first-hand knowledge of the habits of thought of Asiatic peoples, they assume that Orientals will do what Yankees would in the same circumstances. The war I am describing might have settled down into the usual talk-fest. But it was destined for a good Christian speeding-up. On May-day the Number One Orderly and myself were standing on Pagoda Hill when we saw an unusual looking contingent of men pull in. The train stopped, the soldiers snapped into position, and led by a band on the front car, chanted "Onward, Christian Soldiers."

We went down, and the orderly, as his custom was,

316 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

held out his package of cigarettes. They were politely refused.

"Ah," he said, "General Feng's men!"

They wore squares of white cloth sewed upon their left sleeves upon which the following was printed in Chinese "Y. M. C. A." slang:

"The Secrets of Victory.

"1. Every officer must in all integrity and bravery stand ready to die for God and for country.

"2. If somebody doesn't get killed it's not real war—and there can be no real heroes and no real braves.

"3. The body may die but the gun must not leave the hand. Ammunition must not be wasted.

"4. Go in to kill the enemy. When your ammunition is finished, use the gun-butts. When the butts are broken, use your fists. When your fists are crippled, bite 'em with your teeth!

"5. Who is able to give his life to save a fellow thereby emulates true courage."

Such were the five commandments of the Christian soldier. Hardly like the teachings of Him who gave the "New Commandment," that we should love one another. But the Chinese Christian General and his braves had learned their Christianity from the "Christian world" and its missionaries, not from Christ.

"Where is General Wu?" asked the commanding officer of the contingent.

"Somewhere on the front," replied the staff member in charge. "Detrain and stretch your legs."

"General Feng sent us from Loyang with orders not to leave the cars until instructed by General Wu personally," was the reply.

These remarkably-disciplined men had already been on open cars for forty hours and on forced march through the defiles of the Northwest Highway for ten days before that, but they remained where they were several hours longer until the Generalissimo put in his appearance. When he arrived they had their machine guns set up, animals saddled, and everything in readiness to march into action.

Wu escorted them twelve miles up a branch railroad that flanked Changsindien ridge to the west. By afternoon five thousand men had arrived at the little coal-mining town there, the other half of the division having remained in Honan under General Feng to assure the loyalty of the central China Tuchuns. When they had all disembarked, Wu stood on a Standard Oil box and addressed them. They crowded about him, striving to get within range of his voice.

"Over there," he said, "you see the walls of Peking. The capital is now in the clutches of a man who has shamed your country and stolen your wages. He is trying to protect himself from the indignation of the people. You see his lines, yonder. You know what to do. Go!"

Then the Little General squatted on the ground and outlined the strategy to the officers.

318 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

On the heels of the Christians came several airplanes, purchased originally from Vickers Ltd. by Peking under international guarantee that they would be used for commercial purposes only. Daddy Tsao at Paoting had borrowed a few of them to train pilots—also for commercial purposes only. Now, with a supply of Italian bombs, sold in direct violation of the international arms embargo, he sent them up to the front.

The Chinese pilots did very well, wrecking the Chang-sindien roundhouse and killing a few soldiers and three times as many non-combatants (as we learned later) at their first throw. They rained propaganda leaflets on Chang's trenches. One on red invitation paper, which I still have, apologizes for an absence of guest rooms in which to pour tea but assures the misled members of the Mukden army of a hearty welcome if they will come over to the side of righteousness.

We lacked only poison gas to have a regular, civilized war.

Wu returned from starting off the Christian soldiers to find Daddy Tsao and entourage at the sidings. "And is everything set, Dz Oo?" he asked, using the intimate name of the Little General.

Wu replied with a far-flung gesture of the arms. "The big push begins tomorrow, Ancient Elder-born."

The two talked on through the evening—Tsao in his grandiose, grandfatherly manner, Wu in curt, but courteous sentences. "Well, take care of yourself, Dz Oo," said the "Old General" solicitously, as he embraced

the younger man and boarded his train to return to Paoting.

When the Methodists hit Chang Tso-lin's flank his lines crumpled like paper. Sometime after midnight word arrived that he was giving way in the center, in front of us. I crawled out of my blankets at dawn to find that General Wu had gone forward on a "trolley" or hand-car. I looked up Old B'landee.

"Want to see the grand rout?" I asked the Corsican. "If you'll supply a trolley I'll lead you to the show."

I thought of the English priest, and my promise to inform him of the first opportunity to get to Peking. There came a boy peddling fire-bakers.

"I'll give you a dollar," I said, "if you'll run to the village and call the British Mu-sa."

He stared at me. I realized that I had made an error.

"I'll give you twenty cents," I corrected myself.

He took me more seriously. "But what of my wares?"

"I'll buy the whole basket. Dump them here. Now, your peddling business is concluded. Run along!"

B'landee, the British priest and myself set out with our trolley. The priest was the best at the pump. B'landee was too fat and I was too tired.

We soon came upon the debris of battle. Corpses, or parts of corpses, grotesquely disfigured by the vicious soft shrapnel. Very consistent are the humanizers of war, who outlaw dum-dum bullets but approve of these shells! Here and there the enemy had made attempts to tear up or dynamite the railway. He had lacked time to do

anything effective. We lifted our trolley over these places and went on.

A little wayside station was completely wrecked. In the office, safe, ledger books, tickets and telegraph apparatus lay in a promiscuous heap on the floor and the station clock hung lugubriously with a large spike through works and face. We heard groans. In a hole scooped out under the building we found the station master and three railway police.

They revived at the sight of foreign faces. "Is the war over?" they asked. "We have been here four days, with both sides firing over our heads."

Fortunately for them I had brought along my purchase of fire-bakers.

A little later we pumped into Changsindien station, which stands in a cut made through the ridge. A carload of small ammunition was afire and popping off dangerously in one corner of the railroad yards. On the sidings were cars half-unloaded onto the station platforms, which were covered with a jumbled mass of guns, ammunition, telegraph and telephone equipment, sacks of flour and grain and boxes of American biscuits. The only loot which I got out of the victory was a tin of the "crackers." The slopes of the ridge were covered with officers' tents. Their occupants had fled without stopping to strike them.

At the top of the cut, I spied the Little General, standing against the horizon, his arm outstretched toward the marble arches of the Marco Polo bridge, across which enemy stragglers were retreating in disorder.

"Did I say six days?" he greeted me as I scrambled up. "Well, we clipped off a day!"

In the distance loomed the walls and towers of the capital. "And what of that?" I asked.

"*Boo swan shenmo*—not in the reckoning," said Wu with a wave of his hand, manifesting his contempt for Peking and all things connected therewith. "Full of fat traitors ready to play 'little dog' to anybody."

"But I imagine they would like to know what is to happen to them. Aren't you going in to tell them?"

"I'm going to follow Chang Tso-lin, who isn't likely to stop before he gets to Tientsin. You'll be wanting to go in. You may give them the news. I've no time to waste on that outfit."

I slid down to the station, bumping into a Frenchman with long moustaches.

We exchanged cards. That inevitable Chinese ceremony becomes a habit with foreigners resident among them. He was the superintendent of the roundhouse that our airplanes had ruined.

"The Manchurians have overlooked one of our telephone lines into the city," he informed me. "Perhaps you would like to communicate with Peking?"

I put in a call for the American Legation, and waited excitedly for the opportunity to inform the capital of its fate. Mr. Willys Peck, Chinese secretary, whom I had known at Tsingtao, replied.

"Chang Tso-lin's army is in full flight past the walls of Peking," I told him. "Wu has just occupied the enemy's

322 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

field base. Peking is safe. The victor plans to let it absolutely alone. Please broadcast the news."

"But," he protested, "we understood that Wu Pei-fu and entire staff were killed, and I thought you might be, too."

"Sorry," I said, "still alive."

Just then the line went down.

XXXI

RIDING THE TIGER

"One who rides a tiger should give careful thought how to come down."
—CHINESE PROVERB.

PEKING, too long accustomed to be curried and petted, would not be ignored. Within an hour a delegation arrived from the capital in the railroad superintendent's private car. It consisted of representatives from the President, the Chief of Gendarmerie, and the merchants, and several prominent citizens picked for their popularity with the foreign community, and had as "honorary" chairman a foreign adviser in the railway service. Peking hates the foreigner but never fails to utilize the prestige of his face when in distress.

Wu relented to the extent of sending a commission into Peking to represent him. He asked me to act as an advisory member.

The city gates, which had been closed tightly for some days, were opened to us with much ceremony. With General Bay, head of the commission, I visited gendarmerie headquarters, where old Chief Wang was told how

to coördinate with the victorious army. Then, after calling upon several members of the Legation Corps to notify them of the victory I set out rather anxiously to see how it fared with my family. I had not heard from them since the night when I went south on the last train out.

I was surprised to find the Union Jack flying over my premises. A small army guarded the gates. It was composed of my gate-man, groom, cook and chamber-boy, armed with my bird gun, the fifty-bore Russian rifle from Kansu and a couple of antique swords. The commanders were two young British captains who lived next door.

"The city has been in great fear of pillage," they explained. "We planned to protect your wife."

I thanked them, announced that all danger was over, demobilized the army and went into the house, to find its mistress very anxious. She had been worried over the reports carried by all the papers that General Wu and all those with him had been killed by a shell.

On the third morning General Bay called me by phone. "We are leaving from the West Station at eight o'clock to rejoin General Wu."

I missed Bay's train but requisitioned a locomotive and third class car and pursued him over the disorganized railroad.

It was four in the morning when we boarded the Little General's car in the Tientsin Central station. The Number One Orderly gave us a vivid description of the pursuit. Perhaps no such ludicrous railroad war has ever been

staged in any other country. Two hundred thousand men boarding trains and heading madly back for Manchuria had caused considerable confusion.

"We chased 'em," said the orderly, "until they got tangled in a traffic jam, then we had to sit on the tracks and wait for 'em to get loose, so we could chase 'em some more." Such had been the procedure of the three days' rout.

Chang had occupied a grand private train which sat for a week or so on the same tracks where our car now rested. His guards had, with much ostentation, kept all common mortals far from the sacred presence, smashing a kodak or two. Later he established his field headquarters in a village called Jwinliangcheng—"Military Stores Depot." The Mukden Chief was smugly waiting here for the effect of the report of General Wu's death which he had been so successful in spreading.

This was the designed match to touch off an amazing conspiracy. The Jow brothers, tuchun and division commander respectively in Honan, were under the influence of a Taoist astrologer, for whom they had built a temple. Chang Tso-lin got in touch with the "wind-water doctor" whereupon the Jow brothers were informed that twenty-four stars had descended to earth in the guise of men for the purpose of placing a member of their family upon the throne. An obstacle in the form of Wu Pei-fu's army must be removed, and the signal for undertaking this task would be the news of Wu's death in the campaign against Chang Tso-lin.

326 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

The superstitious brothers made a sally to cut Wu's communications but were pounced upon by the Christians under Feng who were watching from Loyang. When the double bad news of the failure of this plot and his own army's rout reached him Chang sent for the traffic manager of the railroad and ordered a train made ready, adding in his panic that failure to do so by a certain hour would be punished with death. Naturally the railway man, who had been constantly told that Chang's forces were victorious all along the line, made up the train with the locomotive headed toward Peking. When Chang Spice-of-the-Forest bustled out at the hour set, he found the train ready enough, but in order to travel in the direction in which he urgently desired to go, he had to be backed out of the scene of his "victories."

Chang abandoned between Peking and Tientsin some fifteen hundred officers, thirty thousand men, three thousand horses, eleven thousand rifles, two hundred and thirty machine guns, two hundred field pieces of various sizes and many carloads of grain and ammunition. He checked his flight at the Lwan River, about halfway back to the Great Wall, where he was trying to reorganize his broken divisions.

Many said that he was preparing for another trial of strength, but Wu refused to get excited, predicting that his enemy's purpose was to get into shape for a more graceful return to his home town.

Callers of all nationalities and purposes continued to come to General Wu's car. Little men came presenting

cards packed with honorary titles, and big men with cards bearing only their names.

French and Italian women brought bouquets of roses and lilies, the American College Women's Club delivered a resolution endorsing General Wu's principles, and a German woman, daughter of a famous military leader, sent a beautiful pillow covered with her own evening gown and a note explaining that she knew how tired a commander in the field could become. This last puzzled the Little General and aroused considerable speculation among the staff as to the ways of foreign women, but he accepted it gracefully.

Then there were more serious things. Wu received word that his efforts to round up enemy stragglers in the environs of the city were being hampered by the Japanese, and that some shiploads of soldiers despatched down the river to cut off Chang's retreat had been held up by Japanese gunboats, which swung across the narrow channel directly before them. About midday came the big, blustering French Colonel, commander of the French contingent of the allied railway guard which is authorized under the Boxer Protocol to assure open communications between Peking and the sea.

Followed by a small escort, he mounted the General's car without invitation. I was called to interpret.

"I, too, am a military man," he said. "I congratulate you. But I must demand your departure. My superior in this matter, the Japanese General, who is Senior Commandant here, orders it. It is the Protocol. I have no choice but to deliver the message. Bon jour."

It left Wu and his staff officers a little breathless.

"By what Protocol does he order me out of here?" he asked.

"The treaty of peace following the punitive expedition of 1900," I explained, "prohibits the use of Tientsin as a military base by any Chinese army, and authorizes the allied commandants to enforce its sanctity."

"But Chang Tso-lin was here——"

"Ah, yes, but Chang Tso-lin is Chang Tso-lin and the Senior Commandant is Japanese."

"For the sake of Tientsin itself I can't leave here for some days," said Wu. "I must round up and disarm stragglers or there will be looting."

"Can you not transform yourself into a civil officer and your guards into police?" I suggested. "Let's see—the civil governorship of the province is vacant, and your recognition as Dictator by Peking can be quickly formalized."

"If I must be Dictator of China, you'll have to be temporary Minister of Foreign Affairs," said Wu.

And so began my four-day diplomatic career. I was "astride the tiger."

We sent over to Chief Yang and borrowed some police uniforms. Then I issued a statement to the allied commandants that Wu Pei-fu had transferred supreme military command to the head of his Fourth Division, Wang Shih-djen, and assumed the Civil Governorship of Chihli, but that for purposes of convenience, the Governor's yamen would remain on wheels in the Central Sta-

tion for the time being. And everybody was satisfied—excepting perhaps the Japanese.

But there was the matter of troop passage. Foreign guards had gone so far as to stop our men with machine guns. An involving incident might occur at any moment. I drafted a note to the local Consuls-General, pointing out the inconsistency in treatment of Chang Tso-lin and Wu Pei-fu, drawing the inference that the Allied Commands had knowingly foregone their treaty rights in the case of the Mukden army, and had therefore established a precedent of treaty abrogation which should be followed in every similar case. I went over to the American Consulate-General to get some help on diplomatic terminology. Consul-General Stuart J. Fuller discovered what I was up to. Like all of his profession he goes beyond his conventional duties for the sake of public or national weal, getting no credit for success and running the risk of much censure should he fail.

“If you will hold that until four o’clock,” he said, “you may receive something that will make its transmission unnecessary.”

I discovered later that he conversed with the British Consul-General, a seasoned old Scotchman named Ker. Ker had authority over his military colleague, whereas the other Consuls-General did not. Ker pulled his commandant out of a meeting where, under the Japanese chairmanship, measures of force against Wu were being discussed. The French were brought into line, and the Japanese given the option of signing a joint communica-

330 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

tion offering to Wu Pei-fu all privileges of passage through the city and environs enjoyed by the Manchurian Chang or having the note go without their name. They signed. And at four o'clock the invitation was delivered and accepted.

General Wu had a dream for conservation of the Yellow River, construction of new bridges, and other engineering projects. I suggested that an International Banking Consortium had been organized for the very purpose of financing such projects. The American group had Mr. Frederick W. Stevens, of J. P. Morgan and Company, in Peking. Their policy, however, involved the expenditure of loan money under strict foreign audit.

Wu felt, as do all Chinese, that this provision was hard on Chinese "face," and made the original suggestion that the money be spent, contrariwise, by foreigners under Chinese audit. With his approval I transmitted his program to Mr. Stevens on my visit to Peking following the victory. That gentleman was very favorably impressed. He wrote a friendly letter to the General which he asked me to translate and deliver, and offered to postpone his near sailing date in event negotiations should develop.

There was a serious misunderstanding, however. After cable communication with New York, Mr. Stevens abruptly informed us that the representatives of the Consortium could discuss only with a properly installed Minister of Finance or Communications in Peking.

"Don't your American capitalists know," asked Wu,

"that we here are going to install the said Ministers of Finance in Peking? It seems to me they had better learn a little more about China before they attempt to do business in this country."

Thus the opportunity to have the new Cabinet officials go to Peking instructed to take up the Consortium program was lost.

The American capitalist demands that the Oriental present unchallengeable credentials, sit across the table from him and talk business as abruptly and directly as an American. The Briton, on the other hand, feasts and signs with anybody. If that anybody becomes somebody, he cashes. If not, he is out only the cost of the food.

To sit next to the seat of power in China was interesting, but not exactly comfortable. Wu's mail brought many letters warning against me. He had a habit of turning them over to me with the remark that here was one more thing to "hang up the heart." "Yours to the General received, referred to me, and contents noted," I replied to the letters.

According to the Chinese fable, the danger of tiger-riding is that once you are off his back your mount will eat you up. I was to feel the weight of his paw, but fool's fortune saved me from the crunch of his jaws.

General Wu soon tired of Tientsin. Worn and ill-humored, he ordered a return to Paoting, leaving command in the field to his man Wang Shih-djen.

Wu's ambition is not for personal prestige or wealth. The driving desire of his heart is to build from the spurned

332 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

human material of his country a force capable of pushing the haughty Japanese out of the ancestral land. He would remove the stigma of 1894.

Wu saw little use in driving Chang Tso-lin out of Manchuria only to leave it to Japan, and he knew that his army and funds were unequal to attempting the settlement of the Manchurian problem at this time.

So, when he had the Redbeard chief surrounded, instead of finishing him he dumfounded us by ordering: "Let him get away."

There was a near-insurrection on the staff. Our Pacific Asian world began to laugh at the Little General. I was hard put to justify him before those accustomed to conducting wars in the Christian way.

He addressed me one day, "Did you ever read in the *Tso-Chuan*" (a commentary on China's history in the first millennium before Christ) "the story of the duke who rebelled against his king; and the king besieged his city, and the walls fell down, and the king's general said: 'Heaven favors us, oh King, let us march in,' and the king said: 'No, declare a truce until the wall is rebuilt' . . . as a result of which there was no further need for fighting?"

"I fear Chang Tso-lin will not show the gratitude of the duke," I said.

"In any case," was the decisive reply, "I am no bully. Chang has been whipped—if he withdraws to his own territory I have no further quarrel with him. He is the only Chinese whom I know capable at present of keeping

the Japanese from further appropriations in Manchuria. He may ignore my generosity—he may remain my worst enemy, but first of all I am a Chinese. Let him alone!”

Messengers arrived from Manchuria promising a general rebellion against Chang if Wu would only give sponsorship. Chang’s authority hung in a delicate balance there: his currency had dropped to a fraction of its value—one more day’s pursuit on our part and Mukden would have repudiated him. But Wu ignored the would-be betrayers of his enemy, to their chagrin.

In trying to explain Wu’s policy toward Manchuria I quoted in my despatches a conversation in which Tokyo was mentioned as his ultimate goal. A correspondent never knows what his head-writer is going to do to him. I was startled one morning to read this banner head across the *China Press*:

“On to Tokyo, says Wu Pei-fu!”

About as fast as disrupted communications allowed there arrived in Paoting a representative of the Japanese government bearing an invitation to Wu Pei-fu to begin his march on Tokyo at any moment—with assurance that Japan would endeavor to be ready! The Little General found it necessary to repudiate the utterance.

The result was a conference, somewhat stormy, between Wu and myself. It was hardly so violent as reported in Japanese and other newspapers—which announced that “General Wu and American Friend Have Fist-fight in Headquarters.” I reminded the General that I had expressly retained my freedom as a newspaperman, and

that it would probably be better should I now withdraw from such close connections with his staff. In the mood of the moment the General heartily agreed.

The Japanese delegate endeavored to follow up the situation. His government, he stated, would support Wu or his appointee in Manchuria as it once had Chang, who now looked very much "like a dead dog"; but it would have to hold Wu and his faction personally responsible for every Japanese dollar or life which might be lost in the change.

The emissary perhaps expected that Wu would appeal for Japanese aid in maintaining order during the establishment of a new régime. But Wu quietly informed the official that he had no intention of forcing Chang from the extra-mural provinces. The Japanese gave Wu a photograph of Mr. Obata, Japanese Minister to China, and received in exchange an autographed likeness of the Little General, and left Paoting.

XXXII

IN SEARCH OF A PRESIDENT

THE government at Peking had evaporated. "Old" Hsu in the Yin Tai Palace cast about pitifully for support. Hoping to ingratiate himself with Wu he issued mandates depriving Chang Tso-lin of all offices and titles. This failed to draw so much as notice from the Little General, who had not forgotten when Hsu authorized a "punitive expedition" against him.

It was difficult to get Wu to take any positive position toward political organization. "I am but the axe of fate," said he, "sent forth betimes to chop away obstructions when they get too bad. At other times I should not interfere, and I will be no arbitrary dictator. Why not let Peking remain empty until in the natural evolution of the nation, it will be filled by a true development of local institutions and not by something which will last only as long as we support it on bayonets?"

"Because," his advisers would argue, "you must supply something, though it be only a figurehead, with which the

Powers can lodge protests when their prerogatives are touched, and some one, though he be only a puppet, with whom their plenipotentiaries can drink tea."

The man of most statesmanlike ability near him was the jolly Swen Dan-lin, who, unfortunately, did not carry so much weight with the General as his other "civil adviser," the blunt and contrary Bye Jien-wu. One evening, strolling in the Broad Gardens, Swen and I amused ourselves by framing an ideal, "reconstructed government."

For president, Li Yuan-hung, deposed five years before by the pig-tailed Chang Hsun; for legislative body, the original parliament suspended by Yuan Shih-kai, disrupted by Twan Chi-sui's ruffians and finally prorogued by Li Yuan-hung under threat from Boss Twan; for premier, the veteran Wu Ting-fang of Canton; for Minister of Education, Chang Ee-bin of Shanghai, successor to Kang Yu-wei and Liang Chi-Chao in literary glory—a man who set up ideas like gods on pedestals of words for the worship of the people; for Minister of Finance, the esteemed genius of the Bank of China, Chang Chia-ao; for Foreign Affairs, Wellington Koo, just returning from the League of Nations session over which he presided. China does not lack for men, and in our idealistic scheming we ignored political and personal difficulties.

"What a shame I cannot publish this program!" I remarked.

"Go ahead and broadcast it," said Swen, growing enthusiastic, "and see what happens. You can at least



ON THE PAOTING STATION PLATFORM

Chinese Soldiers in Improvised "Pullmans" Made from Tents Slung over Coal Cars.

give it out as representing the desires of two men very close to the General!"

The next day China was amazedly reading "Wu Pei-fu's bold and idealistic program of reconstruction." And half a dozen surprised worthies with whose names we had taken liberties—most particularly old Wu Ting-fang—were vigorously denying complicity in the Paoting nominations. But the suggestions had effect. Particularly was the scheme for restoration of the president and parliament of 1915 received as the only dignified solution of the political tangle.

Before Wu came into power he had strongly favored a start all over again at founding a Republic through a new constitutional assembly. Now he realized many difficulties of the scheme which had not before occurred to him, and dropped into a negative attitude toward all proposals. He was ultimately led to exercise his dictatorial power by his interest in a house-cleaning movement in Peking.

About the time of his demand for the resignation of the "God of Wealth" Premier, the Minister of Justice, Dung Kang, began to uncover a good deal of "squeeze" in the Treasury. The trail led to the Chinese White House and pressure was brought to bear to call Dung Kang off. Wu now championed the Minister of Justice, insisting that he be made Minister of Finance, in order that he might have every opportunity to clean up the corruption. Furthermore, he nominated an old classmate, Gow En-hung, as Minister of Communications, to reorganize that department and bring an end to the clique of politicians

which had batted off surplus railway earnings since the days of Yuan Shih-kai.

For Old Hsu to make these appointments would be signing his own political death warrant. He delayed, sending emissaries day after day to discuss irrelevant matters. On May 25 Wu was working as usual over his daily pile of telegrams in a little back room of Tsao's Broad Gardens mansion, when Gow, who had been summoned from Shanghai, stepped in.

"Welcome, Old-timer," said Wu, and rang for the Chief Adjutant.

"Call up the President," Wu ordered this officer, "and tell him that I shall not go to bed until the mandate for the appointment of Mr. Gow, here, is issued."

The Chief Adjutant stepped to the telephone room and transmitted the message, adding on his own that the General was very tired and would prefer to retire early.

"I think I am quite safe in tendering you our congratulations now," I said to Mr. Gow.

"We might give the Minister his congratulatory dinner tonight," suggested Civil Secretaries Bye and Swen.

"Well," said Gow, "I'll do this—if the mandate does not come through before the dinner is over I'll pay for it; if it does come through, I'll accept your graciousness."

We had a high evening. We hired some sing-song girls and then tipped them to keep quiet, such good storytellers did the diners prove to be. Gow told us of his days in King's College, London; of his experiences as Commissioner at Lhasa, when he secretly assisted the great

explorer Sven Hedin, and vied with the British for controlling influence in Tibet; of his arrest, while following his hobby of art collection, for falsely-suspected complicity in the bombing of Yuan Shih-kai's carriage.

What interested us most, however, were his boyhood days with General Wu in the beautiful Gulf-side town of Tengchow, Shantung. Only a high brick wall had separated their yards. They tapped signals to one another through the barrier, flew their kites together, and together attended the Sunday-school of Dr. Robert Mateer, the scholarly pioneer missionary of Shantung. Gow had professed Christianity, and bore a Christian name, *En-hung*—"flooding mercy." Wu, on the other hand, had tried to synchronize Christ's teachings with those of the Chinese sages, but the missionary's influence on his thought was still evident.

Gow neither drank nor smoked. He maintained that tobacco was China's new narcotic peril and that he was going to start a bank with what he had saved by not using the weed. He had company in another diner, who was a member of the great Buddhist temperance society, being "in the oath," as its members designate themselves.

Along about the twenty-fifth course an orderly arrived with word that the Presidential mandate was posted in Peking and General Wu had gone to bed. Then and there we ceremoniously "installed" our new Minister of Communications in office. And in recognition of our ostentatious congratulations, he appointed us one and all Honorary Advisers to the Ministry, with the warning,

however, that we would be fired the next day along with the honorary pay-drawers of the old administration.

Gow asked me to accompany him to the capital. I took with me, aboard his private car, the Pathé camera man who had filmed the Paoting chiefs, and my secretary, Miss Helen Burton, a fearless American college girl.

At Changsindien Minister Gow slipped off the car, asking me to take it on in to Peking. It was met at West Front Gate Station by the President's band, the police band, delegations from various organizations and departments of government, local newspapermen, foreign correspondents and all the honorary advisers and a number of foreign engineers of the Ministry who wanted to "get solid" with the new chief. Imagine their disgust to find that they had met only an American newspaperman, his secretary, and a Belgian camera-man! That night His Excellency Gow slipped into the city incognito by way of Fengtai, and by next morning forty honorary advisers at \$5,000 per month had received notifications of dismissal, which saved them the trouble of calling on the new chief.

Mr. Gow attempted an unusual thing in any country, and particularly so in China: the administration of a department of government after the fashion of a big business. He dismissed two hundred and eighty-four surplus clerks in one division. He cut three million dollars a year off the payroll. He issued an order for all employees to be at their desks by eight o'clock and amazed all Peking by sacking a number of division heads who did not suppose

that it included them. In their places he put graduates of American technical colleges.

"My job," said he, "is to rout the robbers from the Ministry of Communications, and compared to it, General Wu's task with the Redbeards was simple."

Such an unconventional way of going at things aroused intense feeling. Gow's mail was filled with anonymous threats. Old friends and even relatives were estranged. Many assured him that he would not last one hundred days. "I leave these things to God and do my work," he said. "I may be here only one hundred days, but it is going to be an interesting hundred for crooks and favorites."

The President sent Chow Tzu-chi, whom he had made acting Premier, to see Gow regarding a face-saving way of descent from the stage. Mr. Gow, who believed the program recently published capable of execution, invited me to the conference. Under the cool porticos of the Ministry offices we sat and worked out in English, which they both spoke perfectly, a method of procedure for the deposition of the President of China and the installation of a successor.

Old Hsu was to resign to the country at large,—since he lacked a parliament to which to be responsible,—the Cabinet was to transmit his resignation to the speakers of the two houses of the original parliament now resident in Tientsin, and they, as spokesmen for parliament, were in turn to invite General Li Yuan-hung to resume the presidency and call a session of parliament. This allowed

342 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

for everyone to be invited by someone and face to be preserved all around.

The outstanding difficulty was: "Would Li come back?" The Minister of Communications gave me a special train to go down to Tientsin and find out.

In America an ex-President in Li Yuan-hung's place might have gone on the Chautauqua circuit. But quite another way of capitalizing his experiences opened before Li. Joint-stock ventures of every sort offered him shares and directorships for the privilege of using his name in their selling campaigns. Li seemed possessed with a canny sense of which enterprises would be successful and which not, with the result that the advertising value of his name reached tremendous proportions. At the time of my visit his income was estimated as four hundred thousand dollars yearly, most of which he spent in benevolent and educational work.

I found Li in the more modest of his two mansions—the one in the British Concession. His fussy little secretary allowed me ten minutes and held a watch on me. I reached my point diplomatically.

"Why," he asked bluntly, stroking his moustaches which were unusually heavy for a Chinese, "should your friends ask me to leave comfort and peace here to again become president?"

"There is no one else who can do it, General," I said. "You seem destined to be the 'draught horse'" (the Chinese version of "the goat").

The secretary was shocked, but Li smiled. "Yes," he

said, "that's what I would be, or rather a stalking-horse for the ambitions of old Tsao-Kun. I have great faith in General Wu, although I have never met him. But I repose no confidence in that Chihli bunch. If Old Man Tsao would take written oath never to seek the presidency I might listen to you."

"That is a good deal to ask," I said, "but I will put it up to him."

Back at Paoting, I reported Li's words to the handsome Hsiung, Chief of Staff to Daddy Tsao.

"You may publish this statement as coming from the Old General," he said. "He will never impose himself upon the people. He is willing to leave his career to them and to parliament. I do not believe he has any presidential ambitions now. But to ask a man to pledge in writing never to entertain quite legitimate ambitions is absurd!"

I went to Wu. "Tell Li," he said, "that if he will resume the presidency I and my forces will be subject to his orders. Can a man promise more?"

Adviser Bye was all for action. He said: "We'll just put Old Hsu out and escort Li in!"

Putting Hsu out was easy. On the afternoon of June four the pathetic old fellow turned over his seal and left for Tientsin, with hardly a soul to see him off at the station.

Chang Tso-lin suddenly abandoned his elaborate trenches at the Lwan River, withdrawing to Shanhaikwan, at the Great Wall.

He wired Daddy Tsao that with Old Hsu out he was

satisfied, and would resign himself to the rôle of a private citizen, after leading his troops back to Manchuria. Tsao replied that on this basis he could reinstate Chang as a relative, friend and fellow-citizen.

Adviser Bye and Tsao's Chief of Staff Hsiung now got up a party which went gaily to Tientsin to escort the new President to the Yin Tai. They were much taken back when Li declined even to see them, and eventually had his big Sikh gatemen put them off his premises.

China began to laugh at the would-be reorganizers of government. It was necessary to do something to save face. A much humbler delegation consisting of Surgeon-General Liu of Wu's army, Admiral Wu of the Navy, Minister Gow and among others myself went to beseech the ex-President to be more considerate. He received me, as a newspaperman, when he would not see the others.

"This is foolishness," he said. "I can't go to Peking as Tsao's and Wu's president alone. If there were any sort of nation-wide demand I might consider it."

We set about to create the demand. Upon suggestion our friends in various provinces besieged the former President to "save his country." The newspapers were helpful. Still Li was recalcitrant. Gow lost patience.

"You know," he said, "they had to drag Li from under his wife's bed and point a gun at him to get him to take the supreme command of the revolutionary armies. Once in the job, he finished the Manchu dynasty. Let's kidnap Li to Peking. Once there, he will not have the face to decline to take office."

The plot was laid. Li was asked if he would go to Langfang to get acquainted with General Wu, who would, we promised, meet him there. Gow provided a train, ordered it given right of way, and put one of the most trusty locomotive engineers in government railway service in the cab, with instructions that as soon as the President was aboard he should plow through to Peking at sixty miles an hour. And then General Wu queered our game by sending a message to Li to the effect that there was a lot of talk about his meeting Li of which he did not approve, as any conferences between the two at this time would only the more lay Li open to the accusation of being Wu's puppet.

The diplomat W. W. Yen, of whom I have spoken in connection with the famine loan, pulled us out of the hole. He arranged with the diplomatic corps for an advance release of a half million dollars silver of surplus customs collections. Two hundred thousand were to go to the government schools since teachers were striking for payment of back salaries and students were threatening sympathetic demonstrations. Three hundred thousand were to foot the expenses of reassembling the old parliament.

Immediately Li was besieged by telegrams from the original M.P.'s who were leading a precarious existence under Sun Yat-sen's ægis in Canton and others who had scattered to the provinces. They asked that Li return to office and summon parliament. It looked like steady jobs again with generous travel expenses to start.

346 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

The demand that Li resume could hardly be called popular, inasmuch as the populace regarded the whole republic as a farce and didn't care how things turned as long as the show was good. But it was widespread. It was becoming difficult for him to ignore. His secretary dropped me a "chit" on the evening of June six.

"The President" (there is no "Ex" in Chinese—once officially titled always so) "has a pronouncement which may interest you."

I taxied over for it at once. It was a document of some two thousand Chinese characters, addressed to "all governmental departments and bureaus in Peking and Canton, all provincial administrations, the High Inspecting Generals, Tuchuns and Governors of every province, all military and garrison commanders, the speakers of the houses of the original parliament, all parliamentarians, all provincial assemblies, educational bureaus, agricultural associations," newspapers, a long list of prominent citizens in Peking, Shanghai, Canton and Tsinanfu, "all legations in Peking and all consuls-general in treaty ports." It was elegantly written, giving a powerful delineation of the evils of military adventuring, but containing a most naïvely idealistic suggestion for their removal.

"All say that I cannot escape my duty. A man is not made of stone or wood—how can I escape from being moved! . . . It is my inclination to stay until death at Tientsin. Here I can see the white river and the clear moon. The country cannot be saved with one man's strength. I am old. What ambition have I—only that I

long to see reunion and would lay down my life to bring it one day earlier . . .

“Yuan Shih-kai, yielding to evil impulses and instigated by ambitious men, thought to make himself emperor. The disturbance which he created still exists. If we go on as now, the end of our national existence is in sight. We must dispense with our tuchuns or give up our country. Eventually the people will arise and save themselves. Then the tuchuns, who have pushed them to extremity, will suffer.

“Tuchuns all, and military men! If we are to reunite China please listen. From High Inspectors down to Garrison Commissioners, cast away your military power, quit your posts and go with me to Peking to plan the reorganization of the country. Do not merely change your names and retain all the vices of your positions. Let the High Inspecting Generals, above all others, guard against temptations. If you cannot renounce self-interest you must go your own way and I will go mine. I say this with tears in my eyes. May I implore your coöperation?”

With a Chinese assistant on one side of me and Miss Burton on the other, I translated the lengthy document as fast as brain could work, each page as it came off her typewriter going by waiting motor-cycle courier to the office of the *Peking and Tientsin Times*, which gave it to the world in English the next morning. It aroused mingled feelings and various comment. The Paoting victors were not delighted that it condemned them as freely as other military men. But the main thing to me was

that Li was going to Peking. The suspense was ended.

I returned to the capital to wait. I was at tiffin on June 11 when word came that Li's train was pulling into the station. I hastened to his newly-opened Peking home, and was the only foreigner to greet him when he rode in between the hastily-formed lines of gendarmerie. He kindly asked me to put my name first on his guest-book. A little later in the day I brought Dailey of the *Chicago Tribune* around to get an interview and his name was second.

XXXIII

THE SHRINE OF THE LAUGHING BUDDHA

LI YUAN-HUNG puzzled the diplomats. Was he president *de jure* or *de facto*? If the former, their contracts with the various régimes during his five years in Tientsin were with illegal occupants of office. But to recognize Li as *de facto* would be involving themselves with something new again, which Peking diplomats don't do.

Li gave them no help. With Chinese disregard for western diplomatic forms he merely announced that he was "temporarily fulfilling presidential duties." He resided not in the Yin Tai, but in his modest home, and diverted his salary to the educational shortage. There was much talk in the Legation Quarter of transcendental aloofness. Yet on Li's first reception day the entire corps was there—brought by curiosity and fear that one might anticipate the others.

The venerable Wu Ting-fang of Canton was mandated Premier, with W. W. Yen to act until the doughty old diplomat could be induced to come to Peking. He had served under Li Yuan-hung for a brief time following

350 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

Yuan Shih-kai's crash, but could not be persuaded to resume as easily as Li. Sun Yat-sen was on the point of being forced out of Canton for the third or fourth time and yet his henchman Wu Ting-fang, the older and in many respects the bigger man, remained faithful unto death.

Sun, hating Wu Pei-fu for stealing his fire, had at the beginning of the Chang-Wu war declared for the Manchurian. He compacted to lead an expedition against Hankow from the south. Wu was to be caught between the Cantonese and Redbeard jaws of the nut-cracker. Daddy Tsao's observers in Sun's territory told me at the beginning of hostilities that Sun was *Da lei buh hsia yu*—"all thunder and no lightning." His "punitive expedition" never so much as got started. Sun's commander-in-chief refused to have anything to do with it.

General Wu ignored Sun's hostile intentions in a way which must have enraged that egotist even more than the remark of the Tsao men. Following the Changsindien rout, Sun's secretary sent a telegram to the American Legation asking:

"What are Wu's terms?" Apparently Sun wanted it recognized that he had been in the war.

The Legation replied that it was not able to assume the duties of courier or investigator for Dr. Sun. Nevertheless the telegram reached me, "unofficially." I showed it to Wu.

"What shall I reply?" I asked.

"You may say, if you wish, that since there has been

The Shrine of the Laughing Buddha 351

no war with Canton there is no question of terms. I seek the restitution of the constitutional parliament and president. These are the things Dr. Sun's party have been shouting for and I trust they will join me in effecting them."

Within a few days Sun had broken with his general Chen, degraded him and relieved him of his command. In return Chen forced Sun out of Canton. The Doctor took refuge on the ships of his "navy" in the roadstead.

"Now," said Wu Pei-fu, "if Sun will oblige by following Old Hsu's example, we may reunite the country."

Wu Ting-fang, already heavy with years but boasting that his vegetarianism and philosophy would cause him to live to two hundred, went broken-heartedly from Sun's ship to Chen's headquarters trying to patch up the squabble. He took cold in the open sampan, and died from pneumonia within a few hours. Then the navy turned against Sun and he fled on a British ship to Shanghai.

The Ancient Wu was mourned throughout China, north and south. His self-sacrificing death was the tragic touch to Canton's little side-show.

As this manuscript leaves my hands reports are coming in from British sources announcing the indomitable Doctor Sun's death from brain fever. Chinese reports arrive with denials. Sun's last command would be to keep his enemies guessing over his death. That would be like him. His was the tragedy of the "stickler" among a nation of casualists.

For a brief time there were three parliaments claiming to be the duly elected representatives of the people: The original parliament that we were reconvening, the Anfu parliament and a brand new set, incompletely collected by the wall-eyed Chin. Some of the latter barricaded themselves in the Senate and Chamber buildings in the southwest corner of the city. The members or their substitutes of the original body soon arrived in such numbers that the occupants abandoned their strategic position and claims in return for a feast and fares home.

Wu Pei-fu overcame his repugnance to Peking sufficiently to pay President Li a call at sunrise two days after his assumption. Twice Wu had held the capital in the hollow of his hand, but he had not seen it since he was a junior officer. In that interim it had changed, so far as material improvements go, from a medieval to a modern city, but Wu was not interested in its physical "progress." He emphasized his belief that Peking is a good place for an honest man to stay away from by leaving the capital before the sun had reached its meridian. He declared that he would accept no cabinet position nor honor requiring his residence in the city.

He was soon back at Loyang, drilling his troops and sending out little expeditions into Szechuan and Kiangsi in the hope of pacifying these troublous provinces.

"In a year and a half," he said at our last interview, "China will be sufficiently reunited to allow me to take my trip around the world. I wish to take Madam Wu and an entourage of about thirty persons, engaging expert guides

The Shrine of the Laughing Buddha 353

in each country to instruct me in its governmental and industrial methods." He got the idea from the visit of the French Maréchal Joffre.

My old friend the Moslem chief, Ma Fu-hsiang, who had thrown his weight upon General Wu's side, benefited by the delimitation of the territories of Inner Mongolia from Chang Tso-lin's kingdom, and their constitution as separate administrative units, under his hegemony.

The Christian General was placed with his division in Peking to uphold the new president. He immediately proceeded to clean up the morals of the capital. In the spring, he had an argument with Li Yuan-hung about funds. The Christian General settled it by rising up and chasing the President out of Peking.

Li, driven from office first by the reactionary Chang Hsun and now by the progressive Christian General, appealed to the chambers of commerce. They told him that Peking and its presidency didn't matter anyhow, and advised him to go quietly, providing him with a tour to some neighboring countries.

For some months Peking had no president, and no functioning departments of government except the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Communications. (My drastic friend Gow was early forced from the latter, to become, after an interim, governor of Tsingtao.) Things went as well as usual, except for the disturbing train kidnapping in Shantung. Among other disciplinary measures, the diplomatic corps, led by the American Minister, demanded dismissal of Tuchun Tien of

354 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

Shantung, one of Daddy Tsao's boys and a faithful supporter of General Wu in the last war. The Foreign Office refused—having no more way to remove Tien than the Germans have of putting France out of the Ruhr.

The diplomatic corps had to bring about the Tuchun's dismissal or lose face. Daddy Tsao just then sent up to Peking and hired parliament to elect him president. This time the corps was adamant in its aloofness. But along with the invitation to his first tea party Tsao sent the draft of a mandate he proposed to post declaring the tuchunship of Shantung vacant. After all, that deserved encouragement. All the diplomats attended his party and tendered congratulations.

Next day the mandate appeared, but directly above it was another, promoting Tuchun Tien of Shantung to the General Staff in Peking in recognition of his services and especially his activity in suppressing the kidnappers!

All China laughed at the diplomats. They swallowed hard and carried on.

Tsao's handsome Chief of Staff, Hsiung, became Tuchun of Shantung. The leader of the kidnapping brigands had received a colonelship in the army in return for release of the foreign captives. Hsiung invited him to dinner and shot him.

At this writing, Tsao, last of Yuan Shih-kai's disciples, is president. And he is slated for oblivion. For the way to get rid of a man politically in China is to make him president—not vice-president, as Americans sometimes do it. The melodrama called the "Republic" is about

The Shrine of the Laughing Buddha 355

ready for curtain. In the new play which is getting under way the people and their organizations will take the star rôles. On the whole it will be more serious. But, being Chinese, it will never lack the spice of dramatic turn and whimsy.

The abrupt end of my little part in the drama came after Chang Tso-lin's retreat.

After a trip through Manchuria I returned to my family with a case of typhoid, already some days old. Then followed the greatest adventure of all. Ten weeks at the portal of death. I would rather have missed all the others put together than this.

There was a red-haired nurse from Chicago who used to tell me that typhoid was a blessing in disguise and whom I longed to tear limb from limb. There was a husky Chinese "guard" to keep watch over me. And there were the cries of the night street-hawkers, coming to me through the wet, torrid nights like the wails of demons. Two in particular were maddeningly haunting. I would lay awake all night for them, and shudder when they commenced. My faithful Yu appealed to all the departments of government and the army to muffle the owners of these voices in the vicinity of the great hospital.

"It is their ancestral right," was the reply. "Their fathers made their living that way. Why don't you try offering them a little money?"

Yu tried. The next night there were ten voices in place of the two.

I was saved by old Dr. Krieg. In his ancient, cock-

356 In the Land of the Laughing Buddha

roachy hospital tucked away in the deserted grounds of the old German Legation, the fever gradually receded.

A rapid heart brought me a verdict of exile from China.

While Mrs. Hall made ready for us to sail I went out to the Temple of the Sleeping Buddha in the Western Hills. There the moon nightly framed itself in the boughs of many-century-old trees, and a spring with a tinkle like a bell lulled the great form of the sleeping god. That was good, but I needed something more.

Across a ravine was the Bee Yin Szu, and the Shrine of the Laughing Buddha. I visited him there—his belly greening with age, the dust accumulating inches thick on his bald pate, his casual, cheerful expression the same for each generation of men passing his feet. He had seen the melodrama of life and could smile.

I thought over the adventures and ambitions and sufferings of the eight best years of my life, and smiled with him.



THE AUTHOR AND THE "LAUGHING BUDDHA" NEAR PEKING

SOME PRONUNCIATIONS AND PIQUANT MEANINGS

(In the order in which they are met with in the book.
Names not given here may be safely pronounced *as spelled*.)

Tuchun, doo jwin, "Director the force"

Li, lee (As a surname meaning "prune" as common as our
Jones. Li Yuan-hung, however, although his name
is pronounced the same, does not belong to the
numerous "prune" clan, his "li" meaning "black.")

Yuan-hung, you'ann hōong, "Spacious gardens"

Yangtze, yǎng dz "Willow" (A local name for the
"Long River," made general by foreign navigators.)

Hankow, hǎn kō, "Han (River) mouth"

Nanking, nǎn jing, "South capital"

Peking, bay jing, "North capital"

Shanghai, shǎng high, "Above sea"

Tsai Ao, ai as in aisle, ao as "ow" in now. (Also called
Tsai Ao-han)

Yunnan, French u, usually indicated by two dots, thus: ü
"Clouds south"

Paoting, bow (bark of dog); ding, "Protection tranquil-
ity"

Yin Tai, "Moon pavilion"

Feng Kwo-chang, en as "un-"; gwo, jǎng

358 Pronunciations and Piquant Meanings

Twan Chi-sui, dwan chee swee. (Often spelled Tuan Chi-jui)

Li Hsun, lee shwin

Chang Hsun, jäng (as always in surnames) shwin

Shantung, shän döng, "Mountain east"

Tsingtao, ching dow (*ow* as in now), "Clear island"

Tsinan, jee nan

Yu, as a surname usually ü

Kaomi, gow me, "High honey"

Weihsien, way sh'ann

Tengchow, düng jo

Anhwei, or Anhui, än hway

Fukien, foo j'ann, "Joy establish"

Hsu Shih-chang, hsü shī jäng

Hunan, hoo nan, "Lake south"

Wu Pei-fu, woo pay foo

Chang Chin-yao, jang jin yow

Tsao Kun, tsow (*ow* as in now) gwin

Lu Chung-yu, loo jöong ü

Chang Tsung-hsiang, jang dzöong siäng

Feng Yu-hsiang, (ü)

Changsha, "Long sands"

Twan Chi-kwei, dwan jee gway

Chihli, jīl lī, "Direct rule"

Honan, "River south"

Hungchun, höong jwin

Chin Yun-peng, gin yün pŭng

Chow Tzu-chi, jo dz chee

Liang Shih-yi, leeäng shī yee

Tehchow, day jo

Shensi, shan see. (Spelled with *e* to distinguish from Shansi, of same pronunciation but different "tone.")

"Pass west"

Kansu, gan soo, "Sweet Respectful"

Pronunciations and Piquant Meanings 359

Wei, way

Lao-tzu, low (*ow* as in now) dz, "The Old"

Tao, dow, "The Way"

Tao Teh Ching, dow day jing, "Way Virtue Classic"

Tsu Hsi (Dowager), tsu (*u* as in circus) shee

Chou (dynasty), jo

Lungteh, löong day

Tsingning, jing ning

Kuyuan, goo you'ann

Paotow, bow (*ow* as in now) toe

Suiyuan, sway you'ann

Hupch, hoo bay, "Lake north"

Kang Yu-wei, käng ü way

Chang Chia-ao, jäng jiä ow

北東

宣忠兵司三部

車司

勅啟

東國
閱副使署參謀
藏

直隸巡閱使參謀處公用箋

車瑞先生鑒
頃接件請
定收特
有以此
刻
張佐廷啟

牙山

王國基

